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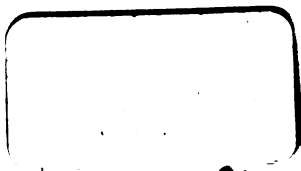
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(Class of 1814),

FORMER PRESIDENT OF HARVARD COLLEGE;

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12 Sept. 1900





ENIGMAS OF
THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

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ENIGMAS

OF

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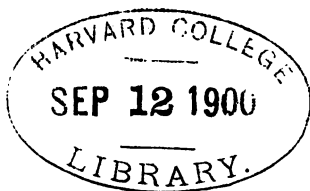
BY THE
Henry
REV. ALEXANDER H. CRAUFURD, M.A.

FORMERLY EXHIBITIONER OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD
AUTHOR OF "THE UNKNOWN GOD AND OTHER SERMONS"

"Give me truths;
For I am weary of the surfaces,
And die of inanition."—EMERSON.

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PREFACE.

I HAVE doubted a good deal whether I ought to describe this book as consisting of Sermons or of Essays. The fact is, that the shorter discourses contained in this volume have all been delivered as sermons to an unusually thoughtful congregation in London. But the longer discussions have been written entirely for this book, in order to give an opportunity for a more thorough and prolonged consideration of certain very deep, important, and difficult subjects.

The title of my book will suffice to indicate that this work is not a collection of hortatory or directly practical sermons, but an attempt to think out some of the gravest and most interesting problems of man's higher life, as they present themselves to inquirers in the present age.

The point of view from which I write is that of Broad-Church Christianity ; but I have availed myself of all the light that I could procure from very many

and very various sources. I have endeavoured, in the spirit of the motto on my title-page, taken from Emerson, to penetrate beneath the surface of moral and spiritual truths, and to grasp their inner and permanent significance. So far as was possible, I have tried to put myself in the place of those who are considerably harassed by doubts, and to show them that real Christianity is a very much grander, deeper, more compassionate, and more satisfying religion, than that which is usually offered to Christian congregations by commonplace preachers.

I must request the less thoughtful and more conventional portion of my readers to bear in mind, that to defend the great truths of natural religion is not the same thing as to assail or subvert those of revealed religion. The first part of Bishop Butler's "Analogy" has a very real value of its own, quite independently of the second part.

Lastly, I am well aware that this volume is only suited to those who believe in the progressiveness of moral and spiritual knowledge. I have nothing to say to those who practically regard religion merely as the most important branch of archæology. "Let the dead bury their dead." Personally I can find no consolation or strength in the belief that God formerly guided and educated the human race, but has now ceased to inspire it. In this book I have laboured to convince both myself and the more anxious and

reflective portion of my brethren, that God still genuinely inspires the mind and heart of man, and calls us ever onward to loftier conceptions of His nature and our destiny. To a great extent, I believe that real progress consists in "forgetting those things which are behind." If the human race is faithful to its own best instincts and to God's gradual revelation of His increasing purpose, I believe that the ages to come will know far more than we know, and will then be able to cry thankfully to the unseen Lord of the Universe, as they survey the long pilgrimage of humanity,

"Nearer, our God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."

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SELF-DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-SACRIFICE.

I.

“ACTS xvi., *part of verse 28.*

“But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm.”

And MATTHEW xvi., verses 25 and 26

(New Version).

“For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?”

Y

MANY thoughtful people in these days feel in their inmost hearts that there is a real disagreement and conflict between the claims of self-culture or self-development, and of self-denial or of self-repression. And this feeling introduces a certain element of indecision and wavering into their moral and spiritual life. The end, or aim, or goal of human existence seems uncertain. There is now often a conflict, not between good and evil, but between two opposite and apparently inconsistent forms of good. There

are, as it were, two rival popes of the moral world, each claiming to be man's truest guide. The one says, "Do thyself no harm"; see to it that thou dost cultivate assiduously all thy latent capacities; trade with thy talents diligently, and grow into something noble and admirable; thus shalt thou "make the best use of both worlds," and experience the truth of that wise saying of an inspired apostle in the days of old, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The other moral counsellor says, on the contrary, Turn thy back altogether on self, and merge thy life in the life of others; "He that keepeth his life shall lose it"; self-culture, or the pursuit of thine own nobleness and goodness, is but a specious and deceptive form of selfishness; it is but Satan disguised as an angel of light; of the grandest character that the world ever knew it was said ironically, but with unconscious justice, "He saved others, himself he cannot save."

The result of all this is that most men make a sort of compromise, and endeavour to "serve two masters," to follow two opposite ideals. To a very great extent they follow the doctrine of the cross, and are the servants of self-sacrifice. But they make mental reservations; like Ananias and Sapphira, they keep back a part. They are not willing, like the poor widow in the temple, to cast all their living or means

of true life into the treasury of self-sacrifice and sympathy.

Many, in a half-conscious way, act as Saul acted with regard to the treasures taken from the Amalekites. They would, as it were, "spare the best of the sheep and of the oxen—the very finest part of Nature's endowments—to sacrifice unto the Lord their God." They fear lest perchance they should be found poor and spiritually naked. It seems unreasonable to cast into the treasury of others' needs even that wedding-garment without which no man may see the Lord. After all, the prudence of the "wise virgins" seems to be commended in the Bible. Nay more, the claims of the religion of the cross often seem quite sacrilegious; it seems almost wicked to cast God's choicest gifts of character into the "burning fiery furnace" of self-sacrifice. For these perplexed spirits know not yet that the fire has no power to harm or even to singe those who are cast into it, because an almighty Deliverer is always there to protect them, "in form like unto the Son of God." Not knowing this, perplexed souls are often ready to protest vigorously against the apparently inordinate claims of self-sacrifice. In heart they often cry out, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?" What gain is there, if a man should win the whole list of moral and religious virtues, and should lose all real life, should become a

mere petrified transcript of the ten commandments? Is any man called upon to be made into a sign-post for the welfare of his brethren, or into mere stepping-stones by which *others* may rise to higher things?

Moreover, it is felt by many that virtue is not everything, that there are many other equally valuable and interesting elements of human life. In their hearts men often ask, Is not virtue the foe of knowledge? Is it not wiser in youth or early manhood to pray to the Creator, as a great soul prayed in ancient days, "Make me holy, but not yet"? Why should I "do myself harm" by mutilating my faculties for the sake of others? Why may I not follow the ways of Nature, who ever seeks the supreme development of her choicest specimens, and scorns to sacrifice them to the welfare of even a million of inferior forms? Why should I become "poor" whilst busily engaged in "making many rich"? Why should I go forth perpetually to aid and succour others, and meanwhile leave the garden of my own nature with all its rich potentialities uncultivated? Surely true charity begins at home. Surely the plain teaching of the Bible is that each separate man must "work out *his own* salvation." My goodness cannot really save another, any more than my sleep can refresh him, or the food which I digest nourish him. As the Psalmist wisely observes, "No man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him."

This latent feeling of the un wisdom of self-sacrifice is, in our days, greatly increased by grave doubts as to the reality of any compensation in another world. The crutch on which the heroic half-starved pilgrims of self-sacrifice formerly leaned has been, in many cases, apparently snatched away from them by science. Heroism now often seems but a splendid and pathetic mistake. There is an element of unreality, and sometimes almost of mockery, in the homage which is now paid to the sublimer and more spiritual graces of character. They seem to be far-wandering glories which have lost their way from paradise, and are quite out of place in the shop, or on the Stock Exchange, or in the haunts of frivolous pleasure. Their crown is now too often only a crown of thorns. If they are still hailed as kings, it is as kings of imaginary worlds, kings of the fairies, kings of dream-land. Or, at the very best, purely spiritual glories are now very often regarded as poor *mediatized* princes, whose bleak, infertile mountain lands have been annexed to the great empire of worldly expediency ; or, as strange fantastic princes speaking in an unknown tongue, and now chiefly valued as a graceful barbaric element in the variegated pageantry of the solid kingdom of the practical and the earthly. If the faith in immortality should ever wither out of the heart of man entirely, the most heroic self-sacrifice would ere long droop and die ; for its roots

are in another world ; it is for ever exclaiming with Jesus, " But now is my kingdom not from hence."

Now, in order to answer, in some measure, the obstinate and persistent questionings of the hearts and minds around us, I propose, in this sermon, to make a few explanations or concessions, that I may clear our way from besetting misconceptions ; and then, in another sermon, I hope to show that, for us Christians at all events, there is no real or fundamental inconsistency between the two moral ideals, viz., that of self-development and that of self-sacrifice. I hope to show plainly that the heroic and self-sacrificing have indeed meat to eat which "the world" of the selfish knows not of ; that it is a simple fact verified by genuine experience that "he who keepeth his life shall lose it, and that he who loseth it for Christ's sake shall find it."

Now the first concession which I wish to make to objectors is this, that self-sacrifice must always be for a real and adequate object. In the deepest sense of the word it must be "expedient that one man should die for the people." We ought not to waste our powers, or fritter away our energies. Concentration of aim in life is not selfishness, though it may often seem such to the shallow and the frivolous. In order to serve our race greatly, we must often refuse to serve men in a slight and transient way. Each man cannot himself do everything. We are members

one of another ; but each member must perform its own natural functions, and refuse to attempt to perform those of other members, even at the risk of being deemed selfish. "Let the dead bury their dead; follow thou me," is the language of the Divine Master, the ever-moving ideal, to the ardent, the heroic, and the original in every age. Mary need not help Martha, provided that she is more usefully employed in some other way. Prophets need not "serve tables." The best and most abiding service that each man can render to his race is to do that work to which Nature has called him, resolutely refusing to undertake work for which he is not fitted.

In taking this course, a man must be prepared to be often called selfish by the unwise. For it often happens that men render the best service to their race in an indirect and unapparent way. A coarsely utilitarian estimate of human activity, such as that of Lord Macaulay in his essay on Lord Bacon, would frequently lead us widely astray in judging of the relative value of the contributions of different individuals to the common wealth. If consistent in his theories, Macaulay would have judged that Jacob wrestling with the angel, and the Psalmist exploring the mystic depths of man's spiritual nature, were both alike only strenuously idle, and that they would have been more usefully employed in mending the shoes of the people of Israel. In our own day, also, many

people seem to think that unselfishness mainly consists in making one's self agreeable at unmeaning social gatherings. But we must resist such shallow notions. Rosamond Vincy—in "Middlemarch"—is not exactly a real authority on moral questions.

I freely own that it is sad to think how much self-sacrifice is really wasted, how often the petty and irritating exactions of some fretful relation waste and fritter away high powers and faculties, which might have brought forth much fruit for the welfare of many. It is sad to see really gifted beings, true sons of God, "sons of consolation," who might have been "a hiding-place and a refuge" to hundreds of their fellow-creatures—I say, it is sad to see these stabbed to death by the myriad pins of multitudinous worries and the unceasing exactions of some selfish relation. I do not think that any person has a right to impoverish and devastate the whole mental and spiritual life of another. Invalids ought to have some consideration for others. And in cases where there is manifestly *nothing to be gained* by gifted beings undertaking uncongenial and mechanical work, I think that they ought to decline it.

Of course it is plain that the very greatest care and thoughtfulness are absolutely necessary in deciding such cases. Men must be rigidly honest with themselves, and not shirk any service that it

is really expedient for them to perform. We must always remember the supreme blessedness of giving, rather than of receiving. We must ever bear in mind the real glory and beauty of the very lowliest forms of service, if performed out of compassion and love. Men must not use fine phrases to mask inherent selfishness. We must not even offer as a "gift" to the more direct worship of God what is fairly due to the most insignificant of all His creatures. God's temples may not be built with stones stolen from the ruins of the wilfully neglected homes of man's natural affections. The priest, in the old parable, ought to have stopped to help the wounded traveller, even though he might have been engaged in reading the sacred offices of his church. No human life can be genuinely healthy or Christian, which ignores the natural claims of the very weakest and worst of our race. We must always remember the words of our divine Master when He said, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Still, it is not right to forego a very great good, in the way of service to our fellows, for the sake of a very trifling one. It is much better that the "Rosamond Vincies" of the world should find their time occasionally pass slowly and wearisomely, than that they should

interfere with the wise engaged in their own appropriate work. The noble instinct of self-sacrifice is given us to be used, and not to be abused. It would not be right to risk drowning ourselves, to save our neighbour's hat or umbrella. If only our hearts be set on genuine service to our race, we may, and must, be bold in defying the mere conventionalities of service. Benevolence does not always consist in doing just what our neighbour wishes us to do at the moment. In order to become a genuine "son of consolation," a man must, in many cases, dare to appear eminently unsocial for a time. The great Son of Man is led into the wilderness by irresistible impulses of Divine wisdom. The tender and fervent heart of St. Paul learnt much in his protracted sojourn in the deserts of Arabia. The world owes much to the lonely thinker of Patmos, brooding over the unfathomed mysteries of the Creation. All deep souls are at times driven into the deserts of Nature, to wrestle with the burden of the world's insoluble problems. Yet it is a poor, vain, shallow judgment that calls such selfish. Rather, are they the true priests of the whole family of man, clad in that old consecrating ephod of the one abiding religion—that ephod which is the very sign of an everlasting priesthood, the old garment on which sympathy has engraved for ever the names of the children of Israel, the names of the whole family of God. And

if the Marthas of this world, the devotees of an absorbing and narrow domesticity, should cast words of condemnation after some deep spirit led away for a time into the wilderness, we may well assure them that what *seems* their loss will eventually prove their gain—that “perhaps he therefore departed for a season that ye should receive him for ever.” The best companions of all are they who have learnt the wise lessons which God teaches the lonely.

Secondly, I think that it must also be granted that the wish to preserve our distinct personality is a legitimate one. I think that both Emerson and James Hinton, especially the latter, spoke on this subject in an unnecessarily repellent way. Hinton’s wish to merge individual consciousness altogether in man-consciousness would, if carried out, be the death and not the apotheosis of morality. His saying, “Perfect happiness is just a putting aside of consciousness,” (see “The Larger Life,” by his friend Miss Caroline Haddon) seems to me absurd. Personality is the unseen but ever active root of all the fairest flowers of our spiritual nature. Hinton’s quarrel with consciousness reminds one not a little of the far-famed revolt of the members against the belly. In both cases that which seems useless, or even an encumbrance, is in reality the indispensable condition of all genuine activity. In vehemently pulling up the “tares” of selfishness, Hinton runs much risk of also pulling up

the "wheat" of the most brilliant heroism. Hinton so hated the disease that, in order to be rid of it, he was for killing the patient. Much though we may love our fellow-men, we do not wish to be turned into mere pipes or conduits to convey streams of benefits to them.

Nor thus would humanity be most truly served. We must be ourselves, and develop on the lines laid down for us by our own inherited qualities. Persons can most effectually be aided by persons in their spiritual life. I think that it is of the greatest importance to discriminate carefully between the most vivid consciousness, or the most developed personality, on the one hand, and real selfishness on the other. James Hinton's confusion of these two separate and widely different things arose, I think, partly from his metaphysical theories, and partly from his keen perception of the radical selfishness of much that is called religion. And I believe that, if he had lived longer, he would in course of time have discovered that his peculiar and almost unintelligible metaphysics were a hindrance, and not an aid, to the propagation of his noble moral teaching.

At all events, it is plain enough that Hinton's teaching concerning selfishness is quite unnecessarily obscure and repellent. He seems to argue that, because *some* forms of seeking goodness are selfish, therefore *all* forms are. And this is not true. In

one of his letters he says: "Selfishness means two things, pursuing our own pleasure, and pursuing our own goodness." Now this is emphatically not true, if by goodness we mean a high kind of goodness, a Christ-like goodness, an infinite capacity for sympathy and benevolence. Hinton's disparaging estimate may very well apply to an exclusively prudential and self-regarding goodness, such as that of the "wise virgins"; but it is obviously absurd when applied to the goodness of a Paul or a John. There can be no real or genuine goodness without deep humanity and profound sympathy. Hinton must have been thinking of the electro-plate of the spiritual world, and not of its genuine gold and silver. The goodness of Jesus or of St. Paul has no mixture of selfishness in it. Nor has this high kind of goodness any ghoulis propensities to feed itself on the ruins of others. Nor can it ever consent to play the part of priest or Levite in the parable. True goodness found its best and clearest utterance in that grand saying of person-loving Paul: "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren's sake."

Such exaggerated teaching as that of Hinton on this subject tends to discourage unduly many honest souls, and to make them look on holiness as a thing unattainable, or at least unattainable to those who are not qualified for performing feats of metaphysical gymnastics analogous to the impossible process of

jumping out of our skins in the natural world. And the world would not really be the richer, if such exploits were possible to us. It is the very fact that my neighbour is widely different from myself that makes him able to assist me, that is, the fact that he has a perfectly distinct and well-marked individuality.

Moreover, if the complexion of my soul were to be entirely determined by the needs of others, I should then be a sort of spiritual chameleon; and my goodness would have far less meaning in it than it now has. I could then have no definite goal or aim. My inner life would be torn into multitudinous and incoherent fragments. Without a well-marked individuality, fixing for me the goal of life, to a great extent independently of the ever-fluctuating needs of others, I should have no unity in myself, no strong thread, on which to fasten the fugitive beads of my variegated benevolence. Instead of a son of God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, or a "son of consolation," seeking for the lost sheep of the human race, I should become, like the God of Mr. Matthew Arnold, a mere "stream of tendency," making for righteousness or benevolence. And it seems to be the will of the Creator that men should in every age be saved by *persons*, and not by "streams of tendency." "The love of Christ constraineth us." "A *man* shall be as a hiding-place." Besides, these "streams of tendency" ever radiate from the most

brilliant personalities. They are as virtue going forth from the Redeemer's heart through the hem of His garment.

The error of many philosophers on this point probably arose from their misinterpretation of the very real fact that each man is not self-sufficing, but essentially fragmentary ; that we are not wholes, but parts of a body which has many members. Sometimes Hinton expresses himself as if this were his real meaning, though at other times he speaks very differently. Truly we are "members one of another." Spiritual isolation is spiritual death. "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine." But, though humanity is indeed one body, we must allow each individual member a certain degree of real independence in performing its own functions. In man the hands and the feet perform their work in a more distinct and separate way than they do in apes. Increasing differentiation is found as we ascend in the scale of being.

The whole school of semi-Pantheistic philosophers, especially Emerson, seems also to go much too far towards sacrificing our personality. It sometimes appears as if these philosophers thought that personality, consciousness, or individuality, was a kind of devil ambitiously haunting the higher realms of life, when it ought to be content with the lower ; a base-born devil, which ought to be cast out of the human

race, and sent back to live in its natural dwelling-place—a herd of swine. Whilst Emerson is complacently paring away bits of our real life, under the impression that they are, at all events, merely transient and worthless accretions, or, at the best, the mere rind of humanity, we shrink with indignation from the process, and involuntarily exclaim with St. Paul, “Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” We do not wish to become mere ghosts, pale, shivering entities, or vague and inarticulate quiddities. We would as soon be turned into pillars of salt, like Lot’s wife. If the future progress of our souls in another world is to be this mere process of unclothing, then I think that our estimate of the value of a future life will be as low as that of the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans; and I can even imagine that that strange dream might turn out true, the dream of one who heard the dead declining the offer of another existence, and refusing to come forth from their graves.

For, assuredly, all that we have admired and loved in this life has been the result and outcome of personality. Out of that secret root, hidden beneath the ground, have grown up the noblest flowers of friendship, sympathy, and the grandest heroism. Even the passion-flower of self-sacrifice is rooted in the homely earth of man’s individual existence. In order to sacrifice self there must *be* a self, a self perpetually renewed, as it

were, the bush burning, yet not consumed. Pantheism, however specious in appearance, is morally false. Its apparent unselfishness is but as Satan assuming the garb of an angel of light. Heroism and love do not lead to the grave of unconsciousness. On the contrary, they are life-giving sacraments of sympathetic individuality, a splendid apocalypse of the divine resources of personality. In them God perpetually repeats the old miracles. Lavish giving up of life leaves us none the poorer. "The barrel of meal wastes not, neither doth the cruse of oil fail." Personality is not starved. "The bush burns, and is not consumed"; for the fire that lights the burning bush of man's heroism and sympathy is drawn from the undying central fires of the moral universe. This "light that never was on sea or land" is a reflection of the far-off splendours of that divine love "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." The world's truest heroes are not afraid of the bitter pangs of advancing death, or of the creeping paralysis of unconsciousness. For in their ears there sound for ever the old words of God's unfailing promise, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

The fact that, so far as we know, life has gradually struggled up into consciousness, that the development of the universe has been by ever-increasing differentiation, seems to indicate that personality is no merely transient accident of humanity, but its highest and

final culmination. It is scarcely possible to believe that Nature would go through such endless labour to evolve personality, if it was only to last for the short period of a life on earth. Why should God's creatures obtain this freedom with so great a sum, if it is so soon to be taken away from them? Why should there be such vast preparations for fugitive bubbles? If personality be but the transient froth or worthless scum of the creation, why do we see the whole universe struggling towards it? Has God decreed that the grandest elements should for ever play an unending game of hide-and-seek, now hiding in the unconscious, and now emerging into consciousness?

Coleridge said of himself, at one stage of his spiritual development, that his head was with Spinoza, but his heart with Paul and John. And no doubt the strongest protest against Pantheism is always made by our emotional and moral nature. Still, in these days, I think that the human intellect is gradually freeing itself from the fetters of Pantheism. The doctrine of Evolution has invigorated philosophy by bringing it into contact with the homely earth. And this invigorated philosophy is beginning to rub its eyes, and shake off the old nightmare of Pantheism, which, like some repulsive and inescapable sphinx, has, through long ages, burdened the breasts of the world's deepest thinkers.

And so I believe that our hearts may now rest in deep and sure repose. We may even learn much from Pantheism, without being enslaved by it, just as Samson fed himself with the honey that he found in the carcase of the young lion which had roared against him. The strength of Pantheism is its power to minister to our abiding sense of our present forlorn and isolated finiteness. We look for a day when "God will be all in all," when the mighty ocean of God's boundless wisdom and love will fill for ever the tiny creek of each individual life. And then, when God lives in us as the veritable soul of our souls, we shall be nearer far to Nature. We shall swim freely in her illimitable seas, and no longer dip ourselves timidly in her shallower waters. We shall then be domesticated in Nature, and no longer, as on earth, encamped in her outlying regions. Our enlarged and emancipated souls will wander henceforth freely in the vast realms of our ancient mother. We shall then fear her no more; for our eyes will have seen her struggling and quivering heart. From our shoulders, as we believe, shall then fall for ever the heavy burden of our cramping finiteness. Deep will cry unto deep; God in us will interpret God in Nature. Nature will then echo back the thoughts of the noblest of her sons; so that of each deep spirit that we have loved on earth we shall be able to say, as Shelley said of his dead friend,

"He is made one with Nature ; there is heard
His voice in all her music."

Yet we believe firmly that we shall not be drowned in Nature. Our personality will be secured impreg-
nably, hidden in the unfathomed recesses of the
heart of God. For how should God be love, save
only by diversity in unity? Though our personality
will be transfigured, we believe that it will not be lost.
Though we shall be "made one with Nature," yet
shall each individual soul be, as Shelley said of his
much-loved friend,

"A portion of the Eternal which must glow,
Through time and change unquenchably the same."

And so we dare to believe that man's self-sacrificing
instincts cannot do him real "harm," that heroism
and love lead not to the dismal grave of unconscious-
ness. Far rather, we believe that they are sacred
stairs which lead through darkness up to the very
throne of the everlasting Trinity, the supreme ideal
personality. And there, as we bow ourselves down in
lowliest adoration at the feet of the world's primal
mystery, we believe that the eternal self-sacrificing
love of God will at length explain to us the enigmas
of our own marvellous nature, and banish henceforth
all misgivings and all doubts by murmuring in our
wondering ears that old assurance of unending and
ever-deepening life, "Because I live, ye shall live
also"; "The Son of Man is not come to destroy
men's lives, but to save them."

SELF-DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-SACRIFICE.

II.

ACTS xvi., *part of verse 28.*

“But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm.”

And MATTHEW xvi., *verses 25 and 26.*

(*New Version.*)

“For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life.”

IN my sermon last Sunday morning I discussed the two apparently opposite ideals of man's moral and spiritual life, self-development and self-sacrifice. I explained how it is that many feel a real and disturbing contradiction between the two ideals; and I declared my belief that the theory of self-repression or self-sacrifice needs to be most carefully thought out and limited, before it can be reasonably accepted as satisfactory. I explained that self-sacrifice must always be for an adequate object, and also that, in

getting rid of our selfishness, we are not called upon to blur the distinct outlines of our personality.

I now proceed to show that these two moral ideals are not really contradictory, that there is no essential or necessary conflict between the requirements of self-development and of self-sacrifice; that these two theories are akin, and ought not to quarrel; that either theory is imperfect, if taken alone; that out of these opposites there ever emerges the fairest harmony. I hope to make it plain that in the spiritual world nothing great ever results except from the union of these two; that "neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man"; that the masculine element of self-development needs to be aided and supplemented by the more feminine element of self-sacrifice; that it is not good that the man—or masculine element of morality—should be alone.

Knowledge or power, like faith, is dead if it hath not love. Heroism and genius are in some ways akin to weakness. It is out of a sort of weakness that many are made strong. The incapacity to live on self, the thirst for fellowship and sympathy, leads the soul to the living waters of the most vivid individuality and of the noblest and most real regeneration.

Now, I think it is plain that modern science helps us here. For, in page after page of its teaching, it

emphasizes and adds fresh meaning to the saying of Aristotle, that man is by nature more social than any ant or bee. Physical science seems in some respects to anticipate or rehearse the lessons of moral science. Even in the lower realms of being, Nature seems to give us many a parable concerning man's spiritual life. Nothing in Nature is unrelated. As Heraclitus taught in ancient days, all things are in a state of flux; everything is hastening to pour itself into something else, as if every fragment of the natural world were fretting against the poverty and restraint of its own isolated finiteness. In the realms of Nature self-sufficiency or repellent unity is but another name for stagnation; and stagnation is but another name for death. In the physical world there is no hiding of the talent under a napkin. Trade with your talent, or die, is the stern command of Nature to her subjects. Nature insists on growth; and each thing can only grow by the help of others. The saying, "Woe unto him that is alone," is verified in the lower regions of life as well as in the higher.

Of course, I do not mean that Nature is an entirely satisfactory preacher of morality. We all know that this is not the case. Mr. Drummond's recent attempt (in his book, "Natural Law in the Spiritual World") to make Nature speak like a most respectable evangelical clergyman is plainly

futile. Nature knows but little even of justice. The Ten Commandments have never been written on her passionate Gentile heart. Nature dwells in the wild regions of a spiritual Edom; and, as regards many of man's cherished virtues, she exclaims with the fierceness of an impassioned scorn, "I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." Nature is a sort of lawless and terrific benefactor, a sort of wild Baptist in the desert, a herald and harbinger of the Son of Man. Nature often speaks to us roughly, as Joseph spoke to his brethren. She does not wish to be troubled by the unanswerable questions of that strange and precocious child that has been born unto her from the Most High. Her mission is to baptize into the sublime, and not into the kingdom of love. And so, when man seeks her aid, in his deepest spiritual necessities, Nature, recognizing that her office is subordinate, can but answer him in the language of one of old, "I have need to be baptized of thee; and comest thou to me?"

Still, we may learn something from Nature. The remoter and inferior incarnation of God, as Emerson calls it, is full of deep interest. We may say of Nature what St. Paul said of the law, that it is good "if a man use it lawfully"; that is, in a rational and

wise manner. In Nature we may trace, as it were, some of the earlier thoughts of God; we may see the beginning of vast designs. Though Nature is fierce, keen eyes may yet discern in her the scattered germs of affection. She travaileth in pain till Christ be developed in her. She is haunted by the Infinite struggling to be born in her. And so, with stammering voice and incoherent words, she sometimes seems to confirm the moral lessons that man has learnt from a higher teacher. Nature does not reprove sin merely as sin; but against the unwisdom of isolation and self-sufficient selfishness her whole life is one vast protest. The very soul of Nature spoke to us by the lips of Jesus, when He said, "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine." As James Hinton observes: "Science, in her latest revelation of the correlation of forces, seems to echo in another tongue the words of Him who said, 'He that loseth his life shall save it unto life eternal.'" Every wild mountain stream, as it rushes on impetuously to plunge into the larger life of the river, seems as if haunted by that deep saying of the Son of Man, "He that keepeth his life shall lose it."

And when we endeavour to trace the origin of our moral nature, we find ample evidence that man was designed for a social, and not for a selfish, existence. Modern science reveals to us the fact that our social instinct is the real root of all genuine goodness, so

that he who withdraws himself from the sympathy of his fellows, inevitably "does himself harm." It is now plain that conscience was born in the lowly manger of our natural affections, and not in the far-off nebulous mountains of metaphysical speculation. Sympathy is the root of morality, and not morality the root of sympathy. The "still small voice" of the Eternal Love communed mysteriously with man long before the giving of the law. And this distinction is of the greatest practical importance; for it must of necessity influence our whole method of seeking goodness. Those who know the real origin of goodness, when they see well-meaning pilgrims seeking for holiness amidst the ruins of old sign-posts, the broken stones of the Hebrew decalogue, or the grave-yards of defunct metaphysical theories — then these more enlightened spirits cannot help exclaiming, like the angel at the grave of Jesus, "Why seek ye the living amongst the dead? He is not here; He is risen." The law may for a time direct, but can never really originate, genuine moral or spiritual life. The stony tables of the law cannot take away the stony heart of selfishness, and give us instead a heart of flesh throbbing with deep human sympathy.

Even if self-culture without reference to others were an ideal that we could realize, I think it is evident that it would not be the noblest thing of which man is capable. The very highest regions of

man's moral life, its most exalted mountains, are for ever crimson with the blood of sympathy and vicarious suffering. The great German, Goethe, supreme in self-culture, can never move mankind as many vastly his inferiors in genius move it. As Emerson remarks of him, "Goethe can never be dear to men. He is incapable of self-surrender to the moral sentiment. There are nobler strains in poetry than any he has sounded. His is not even the devotion to pure truth, but to truth for the sake of culture." This perpetual reference to self is eminently unfavourable to the noblest forms of goodness. It exorcises the Infinite, and makes goodness earthly and limited. St. Paul's verdict as to the vanity of the very deepest knowledge without love remains as true as ever. In some ways Robert Burns, with his erring but most human heart, was nobler than Goethe, though so immensely his inferior intellectually. He that is least in the kingdom of heaven—the kingdom of sympathy—is in some ways greater than the greatest of the self-regarding. St. Paul wishing himself "accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake" is a far sublimer being than Goethe almost willing to devour the whole world, if only he could digest it, and so add to his own growth.

The whole history of our race proves that heroism and self-sacrificing sympathy are dearer to man than any form of merely intellectual greatness. And why

are they dearer? I think the answer is that they are dearer because, in the judgment of mankind, they are diviner. Merely intellectual and self-regarding greatness has nothing unearthly about it. When approaching it, our shoes do not spontaneously slip off from our feet, as though we were treading "holy ground." We know "whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." But the case is far different with regard to heroism and self-sacrifice. These are to us as angels from the Eternal, far-wandering graces of the spiritual world, which have lost their way, and strayed from Heaven unto our lowly earth. Our worship of them is instinctive. A goodness that knows not self-sacrificing heroism is but as a splendid organization waiting for a soul to give it life. The sublime is the source of all grandest life, a veritable sacrament of eternity; and the sublime is for ever haunted by the shadow of Calvary; it is free from all taint of self-seeking and self-sufficiency. By the sublime, as by the glance of God, our spirits are at once "consumed, yet quickened." Selfishness is seen to be absurd, and its questions irrelevant. "All things are ours, life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours; and we are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

But even if self-regarding culture were more satisfactory than it is, for the overwhelming majority of mankind it would still be unattainable. The great

mass of mankind needs the stimulus of other motives besides that of self-respect. As the heart of ordinary humanity stands thirsting beside the well of moral regeneration, it is always exclaiming despondently to its merely philosophic instructor, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." The healing waters of a spiritual Bethesda may indeed be near us ; but in our crippled condition we need that others should plunge us into them. "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine." Others must graft us into Christ. We cannot do that for ourselves.

The whole dreary history of asceticism bears witness to what I am saying. The ascetic method has been tried long enough. "If there had been a law given which *could* have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." To manufacture goodness out of self, to make spiritual bricks without the straw of adequate motives, to live without a suitable environment, has been the mistaken aim of well-meaning men age after age. And oh, how weary earnest hearts have grown of these prolonged and futile endeavours ! Many a soul, like the poor woman in the gospel, has "suffered many things of many physicians, and has spent all that it has, and is nothing bettered, but rather grows worse." What wonder that such a soul should eagerly draw nigh to the transcendent humanity of Jesus, and there seek self-forgetfulness and true

healing, deliverance from the curse of a tyrannical law, and deliverance from the still deeper curse of an exacerbated and all-devouring self-consciousness !

Nothing can really save us but being grafted into humanity. Otherwise the taint of selfishness will mar and spoil all our goodness. We shall be spiritually in much the same condition as that man was physically, whose wish was granted, that everything he touched might be turned into gold. Everything to which we draw nigh will be turned into self, and so nothing will nourish us. And, oh, how weary the soul grows of its isolated self ! Such a soul is like the poor Indian in the story, who was laid under a curse, so that none of the agencies of Nature should work for him ; neither fire should burn, nor rain fall, nor water flow. He must live on self.

And self, severed from the healing and fertilizing agency of others, is poor indeed. Sometimes, with unappeasable restlessness, the solitary and imprisoned soul walks up and down the blighted realms of self, and finds them all barren and dreary from Dan even unto Beersheba. The kingdom of isolated self is as the moon in the natural world ; it is full of the cinder-heaps of withered and blasted possibilities. Even Heaven would be no place of joy or rest for the self-inclosed. Their ears would not be able to hear the celestial melodies, by reason of the unceasing and wearisome monotony of the voice of self. As an

escape from self, I can imagine some souls wishing to commune truly even with the devil himself. Even pain sometimes seems more desirable than utter monotony.

The fullest devotion to others is not essentially unfriendly to individual development for this simple reason, viz., that it is only from our fellows, and not from self or the law either, that the great mass of mankind, including many of its noblest specimens, can learn genuine goodness. Our souls are as musical instruments in which *others* must play, to evoke their sweetest strains. Souls are moved by souls, and not by laws or things. The greatest triumphs of virtue are achieved when it goes out of one person into another, in great streams of regenerating power. The Positivists, though I think that they err in many ways, are at least quite right in this respect, viz., in their clear perception that love for our fellow-men is a much more operative and powerful motive than love for laws or other metaphysical abstractions. We often grieve no more for breaking the laws of religious philosophy, than we should grieve if we were clearly convicted of having sinned against electricity or the law of gravitation, or of having spoken disrespectfully concerning the Equator. Christianity agrees with Positivism in thinking that the "Word" must be "made flesh" ere it can move man's heart. *Our* God is not a metaphysical abstraction. The "Eternal

Father strong to save" is a being of unfathomable love. St. John understood the human heart well, and also the true psychology of religion, when he declared, "We love Him because He first loved us." And so I can enter into the real meaning of the strange language of one who said, "I love God ; I do not love the Supreme Being."

Let us return, then, to primitive Christianity, to the feet of Jesus, and learn again from Him the one only real and effective method of seeking goodness. Let us not make moral outcasts by our practical unwisdom. Let us remember the futility alike of legalism and of mere self-culture. Let us not hinder the "violent," *i.e.*, the fervent and the passion-led, from entering into the fold of Christ. Rather let us "catch them with guile," the guile of an ever-ready sympathy and a broad humanity. Let us freely confess to them that we Christians, like Jesus our Master, value natural loyalty and fidelity far more than the unnatural multiplying of formulas, or the copious vain oblations of prudent religious selfishness.

Let us remember how many honest Gentile hearts, that might have been nourished unto life eternal, have been starved to death by our misrepresentation of our Master's religion, by our making that glad, eager service, which is "perfect freedom," into a system of restraints and meaningless self-denial, and of laws founded on prudential considerations.

Christians often make religion utterly uninteresting, and then unfairly blame men for neglecting it. Human life and the heart of man are both full of paradoxes and surprises. And one of the greatest surprises of all is this, that the very grandest religion ever appeals the most powerfully to sinners as well as to real saints. The extremes of the spiritual world often meet gladly enough beneath the cross of Christ. The human heart of the lawless thief is moved by the human love of Jesus giving His life for the world. The antinomian element in original Christianity, which some esteem a moral weakness, is in fact a source of marvellous strength. It is by pardoning, and not by punishing or threatening, that Jesus conquers the hearts of sinners. The "neither do I condemn thee" of deep human sympathy prepares the sinner's heart for the divine command, "Go, and sin no more." Christianity sways the hearts of the erring because it firmly believes in their capacity for good, because, in its sublime confidence in the final victory of goodness, it dares to say to the most crippled paralytic of the moral world, "Take up thy bed, and walk." It is only by "faith" in the inexhaustible potentialities of man's moral and spiritual nature, that we can remove the "mountains" of inherited sinfulness and evil habits, which are stifling the divine life feebly struggling beneath them.

And thus the "violent" are often led into the king-

dom of God. Heroism and self-sacrifice, as compared to the utterances of mere law, are in truth to many of the sons of men "a more sure word of prophecy, a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in their hearts." These grand qualities, heroism and self-sacrificing love, are God's own mode of communication between saints and sinners. They are, as it were, the one native language of the sons of God, whether they are dwelling in the Father's presence, or wandering in the filthy regions of sinful habits. The voices of heroism and self-sacrifice are, as it were, the unearthly and piercing clarion of the Eternal, as He goes forth to war, heard even by outcasts from afar, heard clearly above the confusing din of the world's contending Pharisaisms and formulas. A sword pierces the heart of the faithful, the unselfish, and the heroic : and forthwith it acts like an illuminating flash of irresistible lightning ; dark caverns of lost humanity are flooded with celestial light ; and "the thoughts of many hearts are revealed." Thus it was with the outcast Sydney Carton in Dickens's beautiful and pathetic story "The Tale of Two Cities." To that lawless Gentile heart the new moons, and the sabbaths and ordinances of a prudent respectability had no attractions at all. For that sin-stained soul there could be no "remission of sins," without the "shedding of the blood" of an impassioned sympathy. The voice of heroism at length

revealed to him the real nature of the crucified Lord, to whom he unconsciously belonged. Scales fell from his eyes ; and he perceived at last the true meaning of religion, that it is but the eternal consecration of sympathy and self-sacrifice. Then, as we all know, he "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Real and deep joy swallowed up all sorrow and alarm. The long unrest of wasted powers, of thirsting sympathy, and of imprisoned benevolence, now for ever passed away. For in his ears there sounded the sweet voice of the crucified Benignant One, saying unto him as unto the lawless thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," in that sacred city wherein dwell the very elect, the great company of those who have washed their sin-stained robes in the blood of the Lamb, in the blood of an unrestrained and self-sacrificing sympathy. For the real paradise is reserved for those who love their race, for "*loyal* hearts and true," for those whose inmost souls have felt the truth of these grand words put into the mouth of a pagan woman,—

" The deepest hunger of a faithful heart
Is faithfulness."

The moral history of the world is full of instances of the truth of that deep saying of St. Paul, that "the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness." So it happened to about

four hundred of our own people, English soldiers, in the case of the celebrated wreck of the ship "Birkenhead," in the year 1852. The ship contained a good many other passengers besides the soldiers. And when it was wrecked, there ensued a scene which Sir William Napier—himself the hero of so many battles—described as being, in his opinion, unparalleled in the annals of the world. In order that the escape of the other passengers might not be endangered, these four hundred soldiers were ordered by their officers to refrain from all attempts to save themselves from imminent destruction. And, wonderful to say, they all obeyed without the slightest murmuring. And so all alike were drowned. And of those "loyal hearts and true" it might well have been said, "They saved others; themselves they could not save."

Perhaps few appreciate adequately the profound moral significance of this well-nigh grandest of all the many glories of heroism. The most tragical element of all in this marvellous scene, and the most sublime element of heroism were scarcely recognized even by the keen sympathetic eyes and the fervent heart of Sir William Napier. The self-sacrifice of these soldiers was supremely great in this respect, viz., that they were called upon to give up *everything*, to cast all their whole lives into the treasury of self-sacrifice. Alas poor, ignorant, faithful men, they had indeed to do good, "hoping for nothing again." The "larger

hope," which is an inseparable part of our life, was probably wholly unknown to them. And, no doubt, almost all of them were what we usually call sinners. For I suppose that no one imagines that English soldiers are usually saints, or even entirely respectable in their lives; at least no one can think so who has known them intimately, as I have.*

Consequently, by reason of their sinfulness and their ignorance of the reality of the divine love, these poor men on the "Birkenhead" were indeed in a desperate condition. Faithfulness seemed to require them to face all the ghastly horrors of hell. In making up their minds to die for fidelity, they many of them had to wrestle not only against "flesh and blood"—against the natural instincts of self-preservation—but also against "principalities and powers," against the unseen but terrible array of the powers of darkness ready to destroy them. Even religion might well seem to them to counsel selfishness. To each of them, as to the Philippian jailor, the voice of St. Paul himself might seem to cry, "Do thyself no harm." The Bible might well seem to advise them thus, Cast away no opportunity for repentance; "It is a fearful

* The author has helped the chaplain of a well-known camp to look after the men for about eighteen months, entirely out of interest in his work—an interest which came naturally to him, as he is a grandson of the old leader of the famous Light Division in the Peninsular War, General Robert Craufurd.

thing to fall into the hands of the living God"; Be not faithful overmuch, why shouldest thou destroy thyself? "What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?"

Then, if ever, was illustrated the doctrine of Emerson that "we are wiser than we know." Then truly the "wisdom" of the religious world was "accounted foolishness with God." In the grand fidelity of these erring but glorious sinners Jesus Himself "saw of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied." The great sufferer Himself must have been then reminded of that dark hour when to Him also, as to these poor ignorant men, it had seemed as if heroism were but a splendid mistake; so that, with piercing sorrow and profoundest bewilderment, He cried despairingly to the Eternal Father, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Yet did God fulfil to these poor ignorant heroes that old sublime promise of His, given to every child of man who dares to follow his own loftiest instincts, against prudence, and even apparently against reason and against religion, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

In many cases, the heads of these poor men were probably troubled by many a misgiving and many a

doubt. Even religion seemed "turned to be their enemy." Yet, in their hearts, there sounded from afar the voice of the eternal "Friend of publicans and sinners," promising them pardon and welcome, and saying to the very greatest sinner amongst them, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"; "He that keepeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth it for My sake shall keep it unto life eternal." Verily there are some of us who would esteem it a blessed fate to be numbered with some at least of the world's transgressors, with those ardent souls whose many sins must needs be forgiven, "because they loved much." The heart of heroism, even though "clothed with filthy garments, and with Satan standing at its right hand," is immeasurably dearer to us than the well-preserved selfishness of many a religious man. We would fain follow it, whithersoever it may go, in its course of purification in other worlds. To it we spontaneously address the old words of Ruth to Naomi: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Even though it should seem for a time that "the hand of the Lord is gone out against" some of the heroic and self-sacrificing, we still prefer to share their lot.

To me, then, it is clear enough that there is no really satisfactory life possible for man, save only the life of mutual service, the life at once of eternal giving and of eternal receiving. The deepest "harm" that we can any way do ourselves is to keep our own individual life isolated from the larger life of our race. It is better to "eat and drink with publicans and sinners" than to be wrapped up in self, and entirely outside the life of our fellows.

And even though living largely in the life of others should take something from us, it gives us vastly more in return. It vivifies and enlarges our whole nature. We may in some ways know less than the recluse student; but our knowledge is far more interesting. Our holiness may be less ethereal than that of monk or nun; but it is larger, deeper, nearer to Christ. In fact, we may learn the solution of the moral problem which I have been discussing, by listening thoughtfully to the old words of one who said, "It is better for thee to enter into LIFE halt or maimed, rather than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into hell-fire." Yes, it is better to enter halt or maimed in mind or soul into the only true life of man, the life of mutual love and service, rather than, having all our faculties entire, to be cast into the very real hell of exaggerated self-consciousness and stagnant isolation.

Nor is there really the least reason to fear lest the freest devotion to others, if only it be a wise devotion,

should in any way impoverish our personality. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." It is by "trading with our talents" or faculties, by the free commerce of mind with mind, and not by hoarding our spiritual treasures, that we can grow truly rich. In the spiritual world, as in the natural world, money, or hoarded capital, would be of no use in absolute isolation and solitude. The needs of others give real value to many of our highest gifts, and thus transmute mere undeveloped potentialities into rich and glorious realities. Thus others develop our personality, and prevent it from rusting. We believe that the supreme personality is a Trinity, and not a merely barren unity. Man is now for ever haunted by a sense of truncated imperfection. Self seems often a barrier and a hindrance to fuller life. But we may well trust that in some other world, when all that is exclusive and repellent in our individuality shall have passed away, when sympathy shall be the law of life, when souls shall flow freely into souls, we may well hope that then at last each spirit will find its adequate development, and feel truly alive,

" As if it were at length itself,
And ne'er had been before."

PESSIMISM AND OPTIMISM.

ECCLESIASTES ii., *verse 17.*

“Therefore I hated life ; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me ; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

And PSALM xxvii., verse 1.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ?”

THE soul of man passes through many widely different phases during its earthly pilgrimage. It is like a chameleon ; it is for ever changing its colour. We all of us are by turns followers of the laughing philosopher and of the weeping philosopher. Life sometimes appears full of joy, at other times full of sorrow. Sometimes we walk through the bleak valley of the shadow of death ; at other times we live in the land of Beulah. St. Paul had hours of the most terrible depression, and other hours of the most confident and triumphant gladness. At one moment he declares that “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now” ; at another

moment he exclaims confidently, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." At one time the chaotic confusion of life made St. Paul grovel in the dust and cry aloud, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" At another time Paul stood on a glorious mountain of vision; the love of God flooded all human life with its transcendent brightness; all sorrow was turned into joy; and the aged pilgrim exclaimed, not of himself alone, but of the whole human race, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Hence the utter folly of labelling the souls of our fellow-men is manifest, of calling one man an optimist and another a pessimist. Deep souls are *both* at different periods of their development. Perhaps the very grandest confidence or joy of all is that of those who have often descended into hell, and there watched the changing faces of the forlorn prisoners of hope, as they hear the sweet strains of God's unfailing evangel of love. We are all pilgrims; and so we pass through many widely different countries during our journey. And it is much to be wished that men would not be so precipitate in guessing at the goal or terminus, to which the spirits of their brethren are going.

Commonplace people often act like officious railway porters, who hasten to label the luggage, before they have clearly ascertained the destination of the passengers.

Thus many deep souls are most unjustly labelled pessimists. Officious railway porters of the spiritual world often label the mental and spiritual gifts of these souls for the region of outer darkness and despair; when in truth they are bound for the Beulah land of triumphant faith, through the long dark tunnel of pessimistic despair. To all of us that really think, there has been given a new commandment: and it is this, Thou shalt not label thy brother's soul. Pessimism is often like the moulting of birds, a thing not pleasing in itself, but still a necessary process. A moulting eagle is grander far than a well-conditioned sparrow. Pessimism is often only a sort of prolonged moulting of the divine eagle wings of the most soaring faith and the noblest compassion and love.

To us in this age the question of optimism and pessimism, the question as to the real meaning of the universe at large, and of our little world in particular, comes home with especial force. Some of our very best qualities tend to make us pessimists, tend to make faith in the providential government of the world difficult to us. Our love for man seems sometimes to make love for God more difficult. That

grand secret river of the Lord, deep far-reaching sympathy, now pours down from far-off mountains into the plain of human nature in full flood. And so it often washes away the old bridges and the old roads, by which the soul once travelled towards perfect faith and hope.

We must in this age learn to swim, or else we shall be drowned. For instance, the optimism of Dives, secured by a resolute indifference to the sufferings of Lazarus, is now for ever impossible to us. And one poor, paltry bridge, erected for sorrowful souls by a well-known divine of our church, has been for ever swept away by God's grand, mighty, swollen river of an ever-deepening sympathy. This divine apparently thought that the souls of the saved might hereafter find peace, though their dearest friends were doomed to hopeless anguish, by resolutely turning away their thoughts from this anguish. Truly, God's great river of sympathy has for ever swept away that despicable and paltry bridge. It would be vain for any preacher in these days to bid the deep heart of sorrowing sympathy seek rest in *that* way, by taking a leaf out of the book of the wisdom of Dives, or by learning to follow the example of the priest and Levite in the case of the wounded traveller. Love does not *wish* to forget. The sons of God cannot be fed on the swinish food of the selfish. As they hang, like Jesus their Lord, on the cross of an unutterable despair, no

sponge dipped in the brackish waters of meanness can slake their sacred thirst. Crucified sympathy, with its heart filled full with the woes of mankind, still turns for ever to the veiled benignity of the Eternal Father, and cries, like Christ on Calvary, "I thirst, I thirst." Better were it to be accounted a fool with St. Paul, than to be wise with the mean serpent-like wisdom of selfishness.

Let us, then, endeavour, with all possible reality and candour, to face the haunting spectre of modern life. Let us try to see if there is in truth any way by which we may escape out of despair into hope, out of the long valley of the shadow of death into the serene God-illuminated land of Beulah.

The creed of pessimism, so far as it seems in any way rational, has been stated with admirable clearness and precision by John Stuart Mill. And the creed of optimism found in earlier days a very careful and powerful defender in Paley, in his "Natural Theology." Let us listen for a few minutes to both these teachers; let us then see how far modern science modifies their assertions; and then let us endeavour to arrive at some solid kind of conclusion. And I think that we shall find that Christianity, deeply studied, is the best reconciler of all that is of abiding truth in pessimism and in optimism.

In his *Posthumous Essays* John Stuart Mill says,

"In sober truth nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are Nature's every-day performances." And Mill adds, that Nature makes no fine moral distinctions between the good and the bad: she is thus supremely unjust. He says, "All this Nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and worst; upon those who are engaged in the highest and worthiest enterprises, and often as the direct consequence of the noblest acts; and, it might almost be imagined, as a punishment for them." And the final conclusion which Mill arrives at is that God is not omnipotent. And he also seems to think that, though the Creator has *some* regard for our happiness, yet that this regard is not very great.

Paley, on the other hand, in his "Natural Theology," takes quite another line, and undertakes to prove the goodness of the Deity. He says that in the animal and human world there is an enormous *preponderance* of pleasure over pain, as is shown by our crying out against pain as something anomalous or unusual. He thinks that there is ample evidence of the most careful *design* to give pleasure, and no evidence of any design to give pain. And he adds, "Nor is the design abortive; it is a happy world after all." He seems to consider the sufferings of

the lower animals, and in particular the fact that they devour each other, as resulting from a choice of the least evils that circumstances admitted of. But Paley does not at all answer the further question, why the circumstances could not have been better or more elastic.

With regard to human life, Paley says that it is clear that God must have intended our happiness, from the fact of His adding *pleasure* to the exercise of our faculties, whereas He might have caused their exercise to be attended with *pain*. His words are, "Contrivance proves design, and the predominant tendency of the contrivance indicates the disposition of the designer. 'The world abounds with contrivances; and all the contrivances with which we are acquainted are directed to *beneficial* purposes. Evil, no doubt, exists; but is never, that we can perceive, the *object* of contrivance. Teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache; their aching now and then is incidental to the contrivance, perhaps inseparable from it; or even, if you will, let it be called a defect in the contrivance; but it is not the *object* of it. This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to."

And again, Paley remarks, "No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization *calculated* to produce pain and disease; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, 'This is to irritate; this

to inflame ; this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys ; this gland to secrete a humour which forms the gout.' If by chance he come at a part of which he knows not the use, the most he can say is that it is useless ; no one ever suspects that it is put there to incommode, to annoy, or to torment." Thus Paley seems, with considerable success, to make it clear that Nature is not malignant, so far as our structure, and that of the lower animals, are concerned ; but he scarcely vindicates Nature from the charge of frequent clumsiness.

And after all his efforts, Paley is constrained to own that his optimistic creed would be baseless, if there were no future life. He discards by anticipation the serene optimism of modern non-religious evolutionary science. His words are : "Now it is one thing to maintain the doctrine of Providence along with that of a future state, and another thing without it. In my opinion, the two doctrines must stand or fall together." In this judgment, I think that it is clear that Paley is right. Mill's pessimism is in great measure accounted for by his want of persuasion as to the reality of a future life. Human life was to Mill a very discordant and imperfect rehearsal ; and he did not feel at all sure that it is preparatory to a grand concert hereafter.

Now it seems to be taken for granted by very many, that the modern theory of evolution has for

ever rendered Paley's arguments for optimism quite valueless. For instance, some pessimists would say that Nature was *obliged* to add some degree of pleasure to the exercise of our faculties, or else they would never be exercised, so that universal torpor and death would extinguish life. And so some thorough-going pessimists have maintained that it would have been better if things had been worse; for then life would have come to an end, and suffering with it.

Moreover, atheistic teachers of evolution seem to hold that what fitness and apparent contrivance there now are in the world, are the result, not of any far-seeing and onward-looking wisdom, but of millions of years of blind blundering and groping, till at last by chance something suitable and tolerable came into being. But the answer to this view is, that there is in truth no such thing as chance; that whatever happens must have a real cause, and that it makes but little difference whether the cause operates from afar or near. If God endowed the original atoms with the marvellous power of expanding into the present universe, if God put into them "the promise and the potency" of the grandest intellect and the noblest sanctity, then these final products are just as truly the work of the Creator as if He had made them with His own hands, as it were.

Evolution cannot really banish design or purpose.

It simply gives us a grander idea of God's mode of working. It purges away anthropomorphic parochialism from our conception of God's way of working. It discloses to us our Creator, no longer as a great mechanical contriver, but as an infinitely mysterious fountain of life and order, who maketh the winds His ministers, who instils wisdom from afar into the senseless atoms, who from the far-off mountains of the spiritual world breathes upon the dead bones in the valley, the dead bones of inert matter, till these "live and stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army"; so that, as the angels survey the marvellous predestined course of these God-haunted and pilgrim atoms, as their keen eyes descry in them the "promise and potency" of heroism and sanctity, they fall down in adoration at the feet of the Supreme Wisdom, and exclaim with awe-struck wonder concerning these miraculous atoms, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" The transfiguration of matter is not of necessity the degradation of mind. The divine still remains divine in whatsoever form it may incarnate itself. Science cannot possibly banish purpose from the universe. From the very depths of the creation the voice of the Supreme Wisdom is for ever crying to such as have ears to hear, Before organization was I Am.

What, then, is the view of the Christian religion as

to the meaning of life? Is our religion a creed of optimism or of pessimism? If we consider the matter thoroughly, I think we shall find that Christianity is a creed of fearless optimism erected on the very basis of pessimism. It is as the risen Lord of life disclosing to the disciples the scars and wounds and print of the nails. Christianity is for ever exclaiming, "The night is far spent ; the day is at hand."

(1) Christianity has obviously very much in common with pessimism. It has nothing in common with the fantastic optimism of Emerson, which deliberately chooses to ignore the darker side of human life. It plainly teaches that the present condition of the world is abnormal, and in many respects evil. Our religion fully recognizes the fact that we are pilgrims and strangers here, and that our life is essentially a warfare. It does not require us to be always in a triumphant mood. It knows that many of the very greatest of the elect are destined to pass long years in the dark valley of the shadow of death. It blesses those that mourn. It knows well the ennobling influence of sorrowing sympathy. It reckons this pierced heart of sympathy as the divinest thing in man. Even when this keen sympathy is so blinded with grief that it cannot look up to the bright far-off stars of the divine promises, even then in that sad hour of the power of darkness, Christianity loves this sympathy more than anything else in man. This storm-riven tree of the Lord, even

though it seem blasted by the fierce tempests of Nature's dire hostility, is yet full of glory and full of meaning to the eyes of a real Christian. *To him* this scarred tree of life seems destined for the grandest services, even though the chattering sparrows of a shallow optimism may peck, with pert critical disdain, at its few remaining storm-stained leaves, those sacred leaves which yet shall be "for the healing of the nations."

Without the hope of a future life Christianity would be pessimistic. St. Paul spake from the very depths of the Christian heart when he declared, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." And in this struggling age, when our sympathy with our erring fellow-men has grown far deeper than it was in former ages, God has sent us a new and ever-brightening hope, an unfailing well of water springing up into everlasting life. The "larger hope," the hope that God will eventually answer the pathetic prayer of our litany, and "have mercy upon *all* men," the real belief that "nothing walks with aimless feet," and that good is the final goal of the whole human race—this mighty trust is, indeed, the very angel of the agony to the torn heart of the sympathetic in these later days. Without this hope we some of us could not really believe in the love of God. Truly, the worn heart of sympathy might well exclaim in this bewildered nineteenth century, "I had

fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Deep human sympathy, having found this most glorious hope, may well exclaim with St. Paul, "For as the sufferings of Christ—the deep pangs of compassion—abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." A kind of pessimism has laid us in the lowest pit; and thence we gaze with adoring gratitude at the bright enduring stars of the Father's changeless pity, stars not visible in the daylight of prosperity.

(2) We must remember also that Christianity nowhere teaches that pleasure, or even happiness, is the end or object of life. If it were God's chief object to make man's life happy here, we should have to own that the object had not been fulfilled. But Christianity, with its sublime doctrine of the Cross, absolutely denies that the production of pleasure for us here on earth is God's chief end. On the contrary, our religion teaches that *progress through suffering* is the real end and object of our life. The doctrine of the Cross, with its divine amplitude of meaning, is to us a precious rock-hewn path of safety between the deceptive quagmire of a flimsy Emersonian optimism and the hideous abysses of a despairing pessimism.

We Christians are not pessimists, because we believe in an infinite progress. Former non-Christian religions were ever looking *back* with regret to a by-gone golden age. We are ever looking onwards to

the far-gleaming towers of a perfected humanity. In former ages it often seemed as if God only beset men "*behind*"; but in this age, Christians know that in a far deeper sense God "besets us before and lays His hand upon us."

We Christians do not agree with Carlyle's despairing, minimizing estimate of God's present activity on our behalf. We do not think, with that embittered sage, that God does nothing for us. On the contrary, we believe that God leads on the whole human race "o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent." Even amidst all the sad cries of sorrow and perplexity in this wonderful age, we may still hear a divine voice bidding us be of good cheer, "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The long dark tunnel of pessimism will lead us into the brighter land of a nobler faith, into the glad regions of that most blessed trust which has died and descended into hell and risen again, into that inner court of absolute affiance, where the cross of an Infinite Love banishes all doubt; where the tear-stained victorious eyes of Jesus pierce into every remotest corner of darkness; so that it is said regarding all provisional and precarious proofs of the Father's pity, "The city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof."

We believe in everlasting progress; and so we can-

not despair. Man in this age is, in many respects, immensely better than he was in former ages ; there is far less cruelty in the world than there used to be. Now, conceivably, it might have been otherwise. Evolution might have taken its course downwards, from perfection down to utter vileness ; it might have been a regression from the angel to the beast ; whereas we know that the course of development has been just the contrary. God has "led the blind by a way that they have not known," out of darkness into light. And this fact that God has led, and not *mised*, the blind, groping instincts of Nature, is full of significance and hopefulness. It looks as if there was indeed an increasing purpose of wisdom and benevolence at work in the universe ; as if in very deed "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." I think that the development of conscience and benevolence in man is full of hopeful significance for us. Over all the suffering, and all the evil in the world, man now writes his decree of extinction. And what is this decree of man's, but a faint echo of the decree of man's far-off Creator ? The immense development of pity and sympathy in this age seems to me full of meaning. It is as if we heard a sure word of prophecy proclaiming the gladdening news, that "the Redeemer shall come to Zion."

I think that Christianity, wisely interpreted, is free from the grave defects and inconsistencies of all other

forms of optimism. The optimism of non-religious evolutionary science is not well grounded. For it teaches that some day things will move downwards again, as the world draws towards its end; so that the last state of humanity is likely to be, according to Dr. Maudsley, even worse than its first. But we Christians believe that there will be a *permanent* glorious result of terrestrial development; that God will gather into the strong barns of eternity all the precious wheat of human goodness. Man's dame-school may well be destroyed, when man has migrated to a university.

The Christian view, that it is not God's main object to give us pleasure, also, to some extent, accounts for much that is strange in our present life. Through self-sacrifice and love, to higher life, seems to us the best description of the real meaning of our pilgrimage. And I think that this may, in some measure, account for what seem very considerable limitations of God's power. I suppose that we all believe that some of God's attributes are strictly incommunicable; that He *could not* confer them upon us. And it seems to me that we might say justly that some other attributes of God are scarcely communicable, or only communicable with great difficulty, and by certain methods. Very possibly, for finite beings, suffering is indispensable for the development of the deepest sympathy. Perhaps God

cannot in any other way make us partakers of the Divine nature, so far as sympathy and love are concerned. Or, if ready-made sympathy could be bestowed upon us, it may be that it would of necessity lack the abiding depth of the sympathy developed through suffering. And thus it may be that the wish for our spiritual grandeur causes God to limit His own powers. It may be that God is training us as missionaries for the healing and redemption of other worlds; and that so it is needful that each human spirit should eventually be able to say, with one of old,

"Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco."

And so our religion seems to me a well-grounded optimism, which has first descended into hell, and talked with pessimism. It is, as it were, "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" standing on the highest peak of the mountain of vision, and cheering the hearts of the erring and the despondent with the old sublime assurance of the inexhaustible resources of God's redeeming love: "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away all tears from off all faces"; "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

Meanwhile, as our beloved brother Paul says

"We are saved by hope." Truly we are now wandering in a wilderness, outcasts from the old home of our mother Nature, even as Hagar was from the home of Abraham. But it is with us as it was with her when "God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water." Our life is indeed a warfare, but a warfare full of grandeur, full of pathos, full of glory. We are often, like Gideon's warriors, "faint, yet pursuing." We are often like St. Paul, "perplexed, but not in despair."

The very fact that God has brought the human race so far in its spiritual pilgrimage forbids any reasonable despair. The old, sacred, guiding fire of the Eternal still leads us on. The burning and unearthly splendours of the mighty Ideal from time to time disperse the thick clouds of the actual. The far-off goal of the human race gleams fitfully on our worn eyes; even amidst the heart-breaking sorrow of prolonged moral failure, an angel of the divine pity sometimes "carries us away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shows us that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." There, in God's nearer presence, the ailing soul knows that it shall one day grow well and strong. There it shall no longer be clad in the grave-clothes of ancestral sinfulness and decay. There it shall no longer need its present moral palliatives, or the

ineffectual opiates with which it now seeks to soothe its long unrest. "The city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." We are born for ultimate health, and not for abiding disease. Thank God, as a modern poet declares, "Evil in its nature is decay." The actual in man is but transitory, the Ideal alone eternal. All souls shall one day hear the voice of the great "Son of Man," calling them forth from their graves of corruption. Our moral grave-clothes are not eternal. "Loose him, and let him go," is a divine command of far-reaching import. Moral and spiritual freedom is our indefeasible heritage. We are "prisoners of hope." We know that "our redemption draweth nigh"; corruption has never tainted our *real home*; "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." There, in that sacred city of the Ideal, into which "there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth," the great "lover of souls," the eternal and all-wise tenderness of God, will welcome, and nurse, and train unto peace and purity the wandering ever-baffled heart of Nature's outcast, the "prodigal son" of the universe. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

THE INCOHERENCE OF HUMAN LIFE.

GENESIS xxvii., *verse* 46.

“ And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth ; if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me ? ”

THE problems of man's heart and soul are for the most part old problems. Fundamentally they are much the same in widely separated ages, though they may present different appearances. Throughout the whole of man's marvellous pilgrimage on earth, or at least from the time that he became truly intelligent, the same haunting mysteries hover around him ; the same unappeasable hunger, the same quenchless thirst, and the same abiding restlessness characterize all human life. One blood circulates throughout the whole family of man.

And so, in these words of our text Rebekah speaks for us all. She anticipates the inquiry of Mr. Mallock, “ Is life worth living ? ” She discloses a difficulty which we still feel, a difficulty which all the mighty

discoveries of modern science are powerless to remove, or even to alleviate. We are still as far as Rebekah was from finding on earth any real and abiding object for our lives.

For us also there still remains the same vain search for a real and abiding centre, for an ever-satisfying end, for a strong thread on which to fasten the fugitive beads of our varying moods and feelings. Necessitated multiplicity of aims still disturbs our inner life. We would fain be like Jerusalem "a city that is at unity within itself"; we would fain make our souls a well-ordered, far-seeing, and progressive commonwealth. And yet, notwithstanding all man's efforts prolonged through countless ages, the soul still remains, as it was in the days of old, a congeries of contrariant impulses, a medley of miscellaneous desires, a city full of rival foreigners jostling each other, and eagerly disputing for supremacy. No graduated hierarchy has yet emerged from the old confusion. In the womb of the human spirit rival twins are ever struggling to be born. "And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels." Thus was the condition of Rebekah a real emblem of that discordant dualism which for ever weakens and depresses the human heart.

And yet we never can give up the search for unity, centrality, and peace. We resist the Heraclitean flux

in which our life is involved. We sorely envy the sublime hierarchical bondage of the stars. We yearn after fixed and constraining law. Most gladly would we follow the advice of Emerson, and "hitch our waggon to the stars." We would fain reduce to order the tumultuous rabble within us. We long to progress with some definite purpose towards some definite goal. We are tired of our perpetual zigzagging. Our vaunted free will seems but a specious heritage of woe, an imbecility and not a power, an idiot's tawdry crown, a banishment from all that is most divine in the universe, a drunkard's senseless and staggering caprice, the maniac lawlessness of outcast atoms discarded by the sublime law of gravitation.

Man's heart and soul naturally wish for a home. The soul does not like to live always in tents. We would fain give up our old nomadic habits inherited from our ancestors. And yet we cannot; for the soul is in this world an incurable nomad. "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." "Man never is, but always to be, blessed." Our dearest friends are not permanent companions, but only angels coming to us from time to time to strengthen us in our agony, or else "wayfaring men that turn aside to tarry for a night."

Illusion spreads itself over our whole life. Our present is for ever discrediting our past, to be itself also discredited in its turn. Our different moods of

mind have not the smallest faith in each other. Youth finds out the illusions of childhood; manhood finds out those of youth; and old age finds them both out, and too often sheds all further belief or hope, as trees shed their leaves in autumn. And with the old illusions there often vanishes also all real vigour or hopefulness. And so to the old man life often seems a paltry farce, a fugitive procession of painted unrealities emerging from a deceptive nebula, and then gliding on to a loathsome charnel-house.

It often seems as if nature took a kind of pleasure in deceiving us, or sporting with us. In the realm of nature nothing *is*, but all things are *becoming*. Nature is a sort of embodied illusion. She tempts us to take refuge in utter scepticism. We no sooner get accustomed to some of her ways, than forthwith she proceeds to alter them. As soon as we find out one of her illusions, she immediately presents us with another. She makes us laugh and cry almost in the same moment. Nature mocks at the staid seriousness of the human soul. As Emerson justly says, "I take this evanescence and lubricity of all objects, which lets them slip through our fingers even when we clutch hardest, to be the most unhandsome part of our condition. Nature does not like to be observed, and likes that we should be her fools and playmates. We may have the sphere for our cricket-ball, but not a berry for our philosophy."

But not in Nature is our chief or strongest hope of finding a settled home for our spirits. Man is far dearer to us than Nature can ever be. "A man" would indeed be to us a "hiding-place," if only we could find a real and genuine man. Rebekah is not much troubled by the spiteful duplicity of Nature, so long as she has the heart of Jacob her son entirely for her own. So long as she has this, the centre of her being *seems* fixed, though it is in truth ever moving. She ignores such theories as those of Heraclitus, when applied to the spiritual world. She feels no sense, moreover, of isolation or aimlessness in life. She lives in and for her son. Jacob's welfare seems to her a thoroughly adequate object for her life. Pessimism as yet touches her not.

Sublime and full of prophetic glory are the grand illusions of the human heart. What tender, fervent soul has not at some time thoroughly believed in them? Every deep human affection has its strange mystic transfiguration on the high mountains of exalted nobleness. Every really profound friendship becomes a sort of religion for a time; it is no longer secular, but sacred. The soul that we love is transfigured before us; "its face does shine as the sun, and its raiment is white as the light." Nor are these earthly marriages of the soul without strange heavenly ratifications. In the marvellous deepening and enlarging of our hearts we discern the celestial agency

of the prophets of the Eternal. "Moses and Elias" talk with us. The bitterness of death has passed. Prophets proclaim in our gladdened ears the immortality of affection. Earth appears the very vestibule of heaven; and we gratefully exclaim with St. Peter, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Here we seek to make tabernacles, in which to entertain for ever the celestial visitants.

But by-and-by the vision vanishes. The voice of the prophets is heard no more. The sterile bleakness of the mountain discloses itself; and affection such as we had dreamed of appears a romantic impossibility. Down we come from our mountain of transfiguration, to tread with perplexity and weariness the old dusty road that seems to lead to no particular goal. "Our silver is become dross, our wine mixed with water." Our sacramental elements are common bread and common wine. Jacob is sent away from his mother; and the very soul of Rebekah becomes inert and objectless.

And so we learn how essentially solitary the human soul is here on earth. We learn that no one human being is adequate to the complete and permanent satisfaction of any other human being. We learn that Rebekah was not wise to seek the true centre of her life in the unstable heart of Jacob her son. We learn that souls, like atoms, never really meet or coalesce, that every human spirit is in truth an island surrounded by the dark waters of innavigable seas. It

is only on certain rare, sacred days that divine miraculous ships of the Lord afford a means of communication to these lonely islands. We pilgrims must learn to live on such divine manna of human affection as God may send us from day to day. We may not store it up in great strong barns of our own devising; for it will not keep. Earthly friendships are only "brooks in the way," of which we may drink freely now and then during our long dusty pilgrimage, and so "lift up our heads," and walk with freshened energy towards the far-off land of changeless realities. The friendships of earth are but transient foregleams of deep, unchanging, mystic glories in the world to come. Thus are we put into training for a nobler world of deeper and grander affections; earthly affections are shadows of good things to come, and not the very images of the things.

Failing, then, to find an anchor for the soul, or a real centre, in the hearts of our brethren, can we find it in work, in some great aim which shall occupy all our energies, and lift us up above the fret and worry and the vain longings of life? Without religion I think that we cannot; and even with this aid we can only do so *to a certain extent*. The pilgrim must still remain a pilgrim. Our souls are too complex and too great to be poured entirely into any one pursuit. Our life is broken into incoherent fragments. Angels from the Eternal are for ever dashing into pieces our

old tables of the law, and making us count our past riches as poverty. Our ideals change; like children, we grow tired successively of all our toys. Man's spirit, like some impetuous, fretting Highland stream, ever hastens eagerly to pour itself into some serene lake, the peaceful lake of an absorbing ideal. But, alas! the soul soon finds that the lake is but a larger pond. No one other soul, and no one occupation may be to us an all-satisfying ocean. All the hearts of our fellow-men, and all objects of interest in this life are marred, and often rendered well-nigh useless, by their fatal limitations. What seemed from afar to be an inexhaustible ocean, shrinks to the dimensions of a paltry pond. The soul cannot swim in it. It is for ever dashing itself against restraining and confining barriers. Itself a native of the illimitable and everlasting deeps, it cannot swim freely in the very prettiest of ponds.

The simple fact that we ourselves are always changing, always growing, never "continuing in one stay," obviously renders it impossible for us to find permanent satisfaction in any one pursuit. Of each successive object of man's devotion and attachment we may truly say, in the sad language of the Psalmist, "In the morning it is green, and groweth up; but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered." An ever-tantalizing, ever-baffling limitation mars and spoils all human objects of pursuit. We need God's

dew from Heaven to revive and water even our fading and languishing ideals.

Many of us, no doubt, remember how John Stuart Mill was saddened in his early manhood by realizing this permanent fact of human life. It was a terrible shock to him when he discovered that his life was indeed objectless; that if all the things that he aimed at were thoroughly carried out, he would then feel but small pleasure in them; that the glory of successful achievements led but to the grave of a hopeless *ennui*. From this state of despondency he was finally delivered by religion in disguise, by that great angel of the ideal, poetry—that ever-progressing “pillar of fire” from the land of the everlasting realities, leading us through the bleak wilderness of our strange pilgrimage. To John Stuart Mill, in his forlorn depression, religion incarnate, as it were, in the form of poetry, revealed the truth that it is only the Infinite that can give real meaning to the finite, that God is the real home of the aspiring, that though we may see an end of all (earthly) perfection, yet that end is only an introduction; for “God’s commandment is exceeding broad.”

In every age the experience of the sons of men is much the same as that of Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher. Pleasure palls upon us. Then perhaps we try ambition and the alluring glories of successful achievements. These also are often found to be

"vanity and vexation of spirit." Great generals sigh for new worlds to conquer. Great statesmen in every age are thwarted and baffled by popular stupidity. Then perhaps we seek repose and restful occupation in philosophy or science. But here also we are beset and saddened by the old baffling limitations. Philosophy, without religion, often seems nothing better than an ignorance which has learnt to chatter in many dialects. It often seems a vain pursuit of unreal phantoms; its joy seems as the joy of children rejoicing for the hour in their fragile and evanescent palaces of cards. The universe often seems a gigantic chameleon. The garments of the Creator, as seen through the kaleidoscope of philosophy, are so unceasingly changed that they tell us nothing of His nature. And so the ambition of philosophy often seems futile. We grow tired of gnawing hungrily at the mere rind of the universe, since its inner kernel of meaning and of nourishment is for ever hidden from us. Of philosophers without religion it might seem as if the divine wisdom had uttered that withering warning, "They shall seek me early; but they shall not find me."

Nor can physical science by itself really satisfy any one who happens to have any heart or soul. When science is illuminated by religion, it is indeed full of meaning and full of glory. "To think God's thoughts after Him" is indeed a grand and ennobling

occupation. But when science casts aside the divine candle of the Lord, when no far-shining benignant purpose gleams over the wild wastes of nature's unheeding cruelty, when God has forgotten to be gracious, or seems for ever lost in death, when the stars are no longer to us the far-off piercing eyes of the Omnipresent Wisdom, when all that is *enduring* in the universe is dead and cold, when mechanism has strangled love; then I say that the heart of man can find no rest in science, in this futile science of the inane, this vain, painted apocalypse of evanescent and unmeaning nullities, this *post-mortem* examination of the ghastly corpse of the universe, from which the soul has long since fled. No, over every temple made merely with hands, over every stately edifice of atheistic science, the soul is for ever writing its sorrowful inscription, "Ichabod, Ichabod," the glory is departed. Of the atheistic man of science the human heart is for ever exclaiming, "He feedeth on ashes"; and the soul cares not to join him in vainly trying to appease its eternal hunger with the withered ashes of the "bread of life," the charred cinders of the once burning splendours of God.

Nor can we find an adequate object for our lives in benevolence and the love of man, if we reject God and religion. "A man shall be as a hiding-place," only if we believe in the grander and immortal part of man. Here I think that we may

see clearly the fatal mistake of the Positivists. To Comte, when seeking to evoke and develop man's noblest powers, we might well say, in the language of the woman of Samaria, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?" The grandeur of religion, with its glorious hope of immortality, is the very vital sap of the noblest and most far-reaching compassion. With the aid of religion we can find a real object of life in the ministrations of sympathy and benevolence; but not without it. The very depth of our pity would paralyze our activity, if we had no hope in God for our fellow-men. We could not bear to hear the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain, unless we believed in its eventual deliverance. Truly, if we had no trust in God for our fellow-sufferers, we should sorrow henceforth as those having no hope. Then truly it might well be said, in the language of Ecclesiastes, "In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

For who could bear permanently to gaze into the restless wistfulness of human eyes, if we had no consolation to offer? Who could for long continue to look into the human face, in which are so often mirrored the honest faithful struggles of poor blind, ignorant souls, after nobleness and goodness—who could bear habitually to look on

this, if we did not verily believe that for every faithful yearning soul "the night is far spent and the day at hand," that great and blessed day, when the Lord of pity and of love shall efface the deep scars of man's long conflict, and heal the sore wounds of those who have erred and gone astray? And thus through the divine porch of sorrowing compassion we are led back into the sanctuary of religion. The heart of Christianity might well exclaim with St. Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong." "God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty." Though all others should forsake Jesus and flee, one aged hoary priestess, the marred form of the eternal pathos of the universe, would still kneel on with resolute fidelity at the feet of the Crucified; for this great "mater dolorosa," with her sword-pierced heart, has no other refuge in all the wide realms of the illimitable creation.

And so, though our earthly life must remain still, to some extent, fragmentary, incoherent, and broken into pieces, yet, through the aid of religion, there may be in it an underlying unity, an ever-growing element of coherence and meaning and power. A divine, ever-brightening pillar of fire will lead us on. The mighty Ideal will ever journey before us. Our incoherent restlessness will no longer greatly perplex us. For we shall recognize its true meaning. We

shall know that it is in truth caused by the Infinite struggling to be born in us, as it were, the Babe of Eternity "leaping in the womb" of the creatures of time. And so we shall exclaim joyfully to our Creator, in the language of a great pilgrim of the earlier days, "Thou, O Lord, hast made us for Thyself; and we know no rest till we rest in Thee."

The doctrine of a future life, for which our earthly life is only a preparation, can alone explain the abiding facts of man's nature. Here on earth we acquire rudimentary organs, which can only be exercised freely in another and a grander world. All earthly joys are but fugitive types and shadows of far loftier things to come. The sweet, though fitful, music of our earthly affections is but a prolonged *rehearsal* preparatory to the glad songs of the redeemed in a nobler world; as it were, music proceeding from a workhouse, the music of prisoners of hope looking onwards to complete emancipation. The friendships of time are but fleeting shadows of the friendships of eternity.

If, then, we would attain even now some degree of real coherence and definite purpose in our lives, if we would gather together into a real and solid unity the chaotic and discordant elements of our present existence, we must "lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help." We must interpret time by the light of eternity. We must cherish the

immortal Son of God within our hearts. We must be able to say heartily with St. Paul, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Yes, for us restless ones this is indeed the true philosophy of life, the real art of living wisely and coherently. This will give real meaning and abiding hopefulness to the whole of our present life on earth. This union with Christ will deliver us from the vacillation and the irresolute zig-zagging which now spoil our lives. Then indeed all things will be ours ; a new meaning will spread itself over the whole world for us. Then shall science become to us a divine schoolmaster. Then art will put on bright robes of imperishable gladness. Then poetry will be to us as echoes of the voices of the angels. Then sympathy will grow ever deeper and deeper. Then friendship and affection shall be to us as sacraments of eternity ; and their faces shall no more be sad, but shall reflect the everlasting splendour of God's unchanging and deathless love.

Thus, amidst the unceasing flux of things around us, the thought of God will be our truest stay. The divine wisdom will be the very soul of our souls. Even now God's blessed orderliness shall to some extent replace our incoherent lawlessness. And so to us for evermore the thought of God, planted deeply in our hearts by Jesus, shall be "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

DETACHED SOULS.

ISAIAH lxiii., *part of verse 3.*

"I have trodden the wine-press alone ; and of the people there was none with me."

And JOHN xvi., *verse 32.*

"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone ; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

ON many minds my last discourse, on the "incoherence of human life," may have had a somewhat melancholy and depressing influence. To some it may seem as if I had pointed out a deep-seated malady of our human nature, without even suggesting any adequate remedy. True it is that I declared my belief that by means of union with Christ, we might find some degree of spiritual rest and inner coherence ; that amidst the unceasing fluctuation of everything around us the thought of God might be the stay of our souls, and that in this way some measure of real and definite purpose might be put into our lives. But, perhaps, my counsel on this subject was rather too vague. So I now proceed

to consider the matter more in detail. I wish to reflect on the causes of spiritual detachment and loneliness, on the various remedies, or at least mitigations, that this sad isolation admits of, and the very real and useful functions often performed by deep hearts and minds condemned in this life to drink the cup of abiding solitariness.

First, then, let us endeavour to understand the causes why some souls are compelled to live in a detached and solitary way, why they are, as it were, unwilling hermits, deprived of the satisfactions of ordinary men, and driven frequently into the deserts of nature. And at first sight it may seem strange that these lonely spirits are often the most deeply sympathetic and affectionate of all. They thirst for fellowship and genuine union of hearts far more than ordinary men do. Their detachment is like that of Jesus, who loved the world and came to save it, and yet was compelled to live uncomprehended amongst his own disciples, or else to retire to the mountains, and there hold solitary communion with the Eternal Father. It is a great mistake to suppose that all who live in isolation have no deep feeling for their race. On the contrary, love itself often drives men into solitude. Their keen perception of and longing for the Ideal makes the actual seem worthless. They go about looking for a real and true man; and, finding none, they betake themselves

to the rocks of nature. It is not selfishness, but depth of feeling, which makes them despise what the world calls friendship. They think little of the "broken cisterns" of human affection, because their hearts ever yearn for its "fountains of living waters." Heroic friendships make all ordinary attachments seem poor and worthless. If we once aspire to share the inmost thoughts and profoundest feelings of our fellow-men, we cannot afterwards be content to become mere companions of their external life. Love is born of the Infinite and Eternal; but mere gregariousness comes to us from our animal ancestors. And so, deep souls prefer the loneliness of the Sublime to the so-called society of the shallow. In such loneliness we are not alone. The heart or spirit of the universe is with us, the heart of the Eternal Father; and therein we discern grander and profounder affections, which have "wandered backward" from an unprepared and unreceptive world, to "wait an æon to be born," to linger in the divine mind amongst those good things which God hath prepared for those that love Him. And thus the hermit soul finds refuge in prayer, and not in cynicism. In the wild wastes of nature it pleads with God, clothed in the old ephod of unforgetting sympathy, and not in the robe of embittered alienation or passionate scorn.

Moreover, as I said in my last discourse, the

pursuits, aims, and occupations of ordinary life are all to a great extent unsatisfying to the really thoughtful and aspiring. There is something trivial about them all. We soon "see an end" of all such perfection. The Ideal pours contempt upon the actual. Our love of the better keeps us from the good. The aspiring spirit is forced to live the life of a nomad. "Here it has no continuing city, but seeks one to come." The soul that is haunted by the Infinite can never really rest for long in anything finite. The intellect, lover of absolute truth, ever seeks for the "bread that comes down from heaven," pure and unadulterated knowledge. And it cannot greatly care for the world's miserable sawdust of catechisms and formulas, or for the withered ashes of an atheistic science, which has set mechanism on the vacant throne of mind. Hence deep and reflective intellects are driven into solitude. They cannot repeat any of the world's multitudinous Shibboleths. Neither church, nor chapel, nor philosophy, nor laboratory of science, can altogether satisfy them. *All* these often seem to deal only with the mere rind of the universe. Whilst men are engaged in analyzing things, their *meaning* seems to evaporate, so that our knowledge is but a knowledge of corpse-like appearances. We ever seek the living among the dead. How, then, should a deep mind

be a partisan, and fight heartily for shadows of shadows? Hence inevitably come detachment, isolation, and loneliness, with their consequent sorrows. Profound reverence for the real God, who for ever "hideth himself," forbids us to join in the world's unseemly worship of the golden calves of transitional and local superstition. The absolute and unreserved adoration even of partial truth seems to some of us an act of unwise idolatry. And so it comes to pass that many a man is essentially lonely, even when surrounded by a crowd in church.

Thus man's heart and intellect alike, when both are greatly developed, often lead to detachment and isolation. They cannot "shout with the larger crowd" of unreflecting dogmatists; nor, in many cases, can they shout with the smaller crowd of analytical and scientific investigators. To spiritual thinkers it often seems as if the "larger crowd" vulgarized and dwarfed the grandest truths, whilst the smaller crowd ignores them or explains them away. And so heart and intellect alike often turn resolutely away from the actual, and seek a refuge in the lonely and inaccessible mountains of the Ideal. Emerson says, "Poets are liberating Gods." And another great writer says, "Poetry is a criticism of life." It is as the idea of a thing criticising its own imperfect embodiment or effect.

It is as the Creator contemplating His works, and pronouncing them *not yet* "very good." It is as the sigh of an aspiring soul that "beholds the land that is very far off," and then cries mournfully, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest." Our present religious philosophy, in its higher aspects, is but a premature description of divine truths still "struggling to be born" in the nebulous realms of poetry. Love is but as a precocious and far-wandering child of poetry; in the bleak deserts of the actual it seeks vainly to satisfy its abiding hunger with the poor husks that swine do eat. Shelley's poem, "Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude," is full of sad and permanent significance. Deep souls ever seek the Ideal, and many perish in the search. Their emotional and mental state, age after age, is the same as that of the youthful Augustine seeking rest in something which he had not yet found. Not of himself alone, but of many a lonely and thirsting spirit throughout the ages, Augustine might well write, "I loved not yet, yet I loved to love. I was seeking what I might love, loving to love."

The Ideal, then, is the home of unsatisfied and upward-looking spirits; and the chief prophet of the Ideal, its God-man, is poetry. Here, even in exile and sorrow, we may often solace ourselves by singing

the "songs of Zion." The criticism of our present life is sometimes turned into a most suggestive prophecy of a higher life. And our ancient mother, Nature, has many a balm for the wounded spirits of the solitary. It sometimes seems as if her spacious realms, with their divine amplitude, were a vast "city of refuge" for the sorrowful outcasts of the human race. It sometimes seems as if Nature knew that these unmated souls could love her best. She "gathers together the outcasts of Israel" in her homes of silent thought. She offers peace to those who have renounced all hopes of happiness. Her true sheep hear her voice, and she gives to them the "eternal life" of disinterested and ever-increasing knowledge. Nature is genuinely catholic. In her "many mansions" there is room for every sort of thinker. She forces on us no sectarian Shibboleths; neither doth she scorn or upbraid sinners stained with mire. Perhaps this "remoter incarnation of God" has not yet reached, and never will reach, the austere stage of moral development. She is "without law," that is, without what man calls law; though, perhaps, "not without law to God," not without the germs of wild and superhuman nobleness. Nature's indeterminate vagueness and her rich ever-varying potentialities are full of consolation to hearts saddened by the finiteness of the actual. The divine power often appears so limited in the human world, and so

far-ranging in the natural world. Man often kills or stifles in us the sacred instincts of awe, wonder, and reverence ; and these revive once more in the deserts of Nature. The miracles of the churches are but poor imitations of the vaster miracles of Nature. The sun, the moon, and the stars are a real revelation to those who care little for the feeble glimmering of our parochial illuminations. Thus the soul frequently breathes more freely in the desert than in cities. A divine calm takes the place of our old feverish unrest. Nature's flowing streams and murmuring forests sometimes seem to speak to us of the divine omnipresence, and to assure our timid spirits that "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps."

I think also that detached spirits learn a higher and more adequate philosophy than any which can be acquired by the gregarious. These lonely spirits see things more as they really are, "*sub specie eternitatis*." Crowds beget or nourish illusions, which solitary thought disperses. In lonely contemplation of the starry heavens we get rid, to a large extent, of our clinging anthropomorphic errors. We feel deeply our own utter insignificance. Our exaggerated and monstrous personality is immensely reduced. On the "holy ground" of God's marvellous revelations we instinctively put off the shoes of our paltry idiosyncrasies. Our individual reason becomes universalized ; its "earthly house of this tabernacle is

dissolved"; it is "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Our personality is emancipated and redeemed. Our reason is borne along in chariots of fire through the "many mansions" of the universal mind. The genie is no longer shut up in a tiny bottle, as it were. A philosophy untouched by Pantheism is but a village philosophy. "The proper study of mankind" is *not* exclusively "man." On the contrary, there are times when the universal reason calls upon us to let go our provincial and exclusively anthropomorphic wisdom, and listen to the unearthly music of the spheres. Pope's teaching needs to be qualified by that of St. Paul and of Isaiah; "Our citizenship is in the heavens"; "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Philosophy is nothing without inspiration; and that comes to us chiefly in lonely communion with Nature and with God. The parochial "wisdom of the world" is often counted foolishness with God. It is often true that we must "forsake all"—all our hoarded intellectual treasures—if we would indeed follow the Absolute Reason. When inspiration is streaming into our souls like a flood, we must not seek to impose our own limitations upon it. The transitional forms of our understanding must not be turned into opaque clouds to shut out the Infinite.

Solitude and spiritual detachment also help to

bring us nearer to God. The Creator heals the wounds which He Himself has inflicted on the human heart. We must deal directly with God Himself, and not employ a deputy. If, through an unwise timidity, we employ some Moses to speak unto God for us, then our wisdom will be only a diluted wisdom, and no radiant glories of celestial reason will shine on our faces. We shall not be able to instruct our fellow-men with the imperious and penetrating might of genuine "authority"; we shall only teach them "as the Scribes." The lonely Jacob, wrestling through the dark night with the dim phantom form of undiscovered truth, is the type of deep and serious souls throughout the ages. The multitude does indeed fear to speak with God, lest it die; but the multitude is foolish. If we seek to know the inner meaning or purpose of the universe, we must at times withdraw far from the crowd. We must remove all impediments to divine communion. We must strip off from our souls layer after layer of egotism, of prejudice, and of inherited notions; we must reduce to a "wise passiveness" the tumultuous and discordant voices of eager individualistic impulses within us; and then, stripped bare of everything save open-eyed reason and far-ranging love, each of us must cry humbly to the fountal wisdom of the Most High, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

Then, in that sacred loneliness, we shall learn

much. "The invisible things of God" will in some dim way manifest themselves to us. We shall discern real traces of the great primal mind. In the vast bewildering sands of Nature we shall perceive faint footmarks of that ineffable Reality "whom no man hath seen, nor can see." The garments of the Creator will no longer entirely hide Him from us. Through them will steal forth gleams of all-gladdening light, to revive our fainting spirits, gleams of increasing purpose, gleams of a colossal order and an unimaginable harmony, gleams of a dazzling intellectual beauty that "never was on sea or land," gleams of imperishable tenderness, gleams of all-healing and all-embracing pity and love. Some of us are in truth *driven* to God, whether we will or no. We are confronted by two inevitable alternatives, the theory of Malebranche, or the dull apathy of a hopeless despair. Either we must see all things in God, or else our portion must be the blackness of darkness for ever. The Ideal is our only true "city of refuge"; and vainly have we sought it elsewhere. Nature ever keeps us waiting in the outer courts of the temple of knowledge. She is but as a herald, and not the veritable Messiah. She can make us wait more patiently for redemption; but she cannot herself adequately redeem us. She feeds us only on symbols. She is but the vast "shadow of good

things to come, and not the very image of them." Her sublime mountains, her mighty oceans, her multitudinous suns, moons, and stars, all cry aloud to us that in our sorest straits they cannot adequately help us. All proclaim with one voice, "He made us, we are not He." Nature is an admirable *partial* education, but not a complete one. She suggests far more questions and difficulties than she ever answers. If the universe be indeed arranged on hierarchical principles, analogy must always be a most imperfect clue to its grander mysteries. The lower cannot really explain to us the higher. The Virgin Mary cannot understand her divine son. In fact it often seems as if our ancient mother, Nature, was tired of being questioned by us.

By man also are we driven and goaded to God. We cannot find the ideal of man in any number of existing men ; and so we go forth to seek for it in God. We want to find the sources of our spiritual Nile. And here Darwinism does not help us in the least, but rather makes confusion worse confounded. Practically, it bids us seek for the Ideal in the lair of wild beasts. It would derive reason from the irrational. Its principles make chaos the father of cosmos. It confounds cause with *method* of production. It gives us a conduit or the banks of a river as a sufficient account of the hidden origin of the river. It does not understand that the idea

of a thing must be prior to its realization or development in time. By way of explaining man, it simply explains him away.

"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." These words might well serve to express our feelings after reading a Darwinian treatise on man ; at least, if it is put forth as at all an adequate explanation of him. It would be no real account of the nature of angels, if we were to explain how their wings came to grow. The ideal man transcends his pristine animality. He is no longer in that loathsome grave. He has risen from the dead. It was not possible that he should be holden of the old degradation. Original animality sometimes seems almost as irrelevant an account of the grander specimens of our race, as would be an account or history of Jesus which should trace Him back to the manger, and *therein* find the secret of His surpassing holiness. In hours of spiritual exaltation we feel and know that man is very far more than a mere culmination of the animal world. And yet the actual man, as he exists under ordinary circumstances, is full of inherent contradictions and insoluble enigmas, at once the glory and the outcast of the universe. Man's inherent dualism, though it delivers us from the nightmare of the more relentless evolutionary philosophy, is full of abiding sadness. An intolerable irony seems to pervade all human

life. Our actions mock at our prayers and our aspirations. Great natures often seem wholly unfitted to their environment ; they are as those "born out of due season." It often appears as if they were unsuited alike to the world and to God. As the deep, ever-craving spirit, weary of earth and laden with its hated imperfections, raises its tear-stained eyes to the far-off heavens, some mocking and ironical fiend seems to reprove and sadden it with those old scornful and depressing words, "He trusted in God ; let Him deliver him now, if He will have him ; for he said, I am the Son of God."

And so we feel that humanity is not self-interpreting. In order to understand man's nature, we must, for a time, "cease from man." We must try to look at man "*sub specie eternitatis*." It doth not yet appear what man shall be. God only can disclose to us the goal of our nature. We must get rid to some extent of our impatience and of our view of time. We must learn to see the end even in the unpromising and doubtful beginning. From the dimly-descried ideal must flash forth some spiritual splendour, to illuminate and interpret the actual. We must learn gradually to "behold the land that is very far off." Human life without God, the divine Ideal, appears totally meaningless, when closely examined. Till the Spirit of God breathes upon it, it is "without form, and void," and the deeps of man's mysterious nature are veiled in

darkness. All that is noblest in man is most full of sadness, apart from God. Our love of man often drives us from man to God. We go forth into the desert, as lonely but devoted pioneers of our race. We cannot any longer endure the chilling irony which, like some subtle poison, has diffused itself throughout our grandest affections. We pray God to enlighten us, or to slay us. In the bleak wilderness of perplexity, sorrow, and isolation, the deepest human love cries vehemently to the divine love, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." And the fate of this daring human affection is either death or splendid victory. Either God "buries it in a valley in the land of Moab," far away from those whom it loves, and "no man knoweth of its sepulchre unto this day"; or it returns to its own people, its face radiant with the glory of celestial knowledge, its heart "enlarged" through fear, made more than conqueror through Him that loved it. Henceforth this mighty warrior, with garments rolled in blood, speaks with the calm authority of one who has seen with his own eyes, of one who is able to say, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." And Nature often seems to bear witness to the teaching of such solitary conquerors. They "make all things new." "The mountains bring peace to the people." The Sublime assumes a friendly aspect towards human life.

Many are the compensating joys of detached human spirits. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." The friendships of such souls may be rarer, but they are far profounder, than those of commonplace people. They do not skim over the mere surface of their friend's nature, but dive down into its depths, so that deep answereth unto deep. In the case of ordinary Englishmen, an exaggerated domesticity has supplanted friendship. To an average Englishman the old heroic friendships of ancient Greece would seem absurd. Yet is human life immensely impoverished through their absence. If domesticity is the grave of all deep friendship, it is so much the worse for domesticity. The life of many a professional man in our own country, whose real interest hardly ever wanders beyond his business and his domestic hearth, is essentially a narrow and a poor one. The life of ancient Athens was far nobler and more broadly human. "Having food and raiment" and a wife, to be therewith content, is a mark of a narrow and unaspiring mind. Unmitigated domesticity means monotony, and monotony induces torpor. It was not desirable, but simply deplorable, that "Lydgate's" whole nature should be influenced and half paralyzed by the paltry spirit of the frivolous "Rosamond Vincy." A small-souled wife, absorbing and domineering over all the varied powers of a

many-sided man, is as Delilah of old, who made Samson "sleep upon her knees," and then had "his locks shaven," and "began to afflict him, and his strength went from him." No wise woman would wish to turn her husband into a domestic machine—or to cut him off from deep and varied culture, and so hand him over to our modern Philistines.

The friendships of detached souls are in some cases certainly far deeper than those of more satisfied souls. Perhaps their long sojourn in the waste places of Nature to a great extent frees them from that repelling conventionality, which masks the greater portion of human hearts, so that they make themselves known to congenial spirits more quickly and more adequately. Probably, also, a certain wildness as of the desert, a certain elemental fervour, a kind of fiery and almost lawless violence—as the Bible would call it—helps to unite in deepest fellowship the hearts of the more lonely spirits. Their affection is not hampered by those endless conditions, those "ifs" and "buts," which render so much ordinary affection well-nigh worthless. Their love is of a more absolute nature. The loyalty of deep, wild, lawless hearts, reared in some spiritual Edom, is often far truer and better than that of the respectable. Heroic friendships can scarcely exist except between such as are "not under the law," who judge that sympathy and the real communion of heart with heart are of

inestimably more importance than the most punctual compliance with all the enactments of moral Pharisaism. The grandest human friendships have ever in them a little of the proud independent spirit of the lonely Prometheus. Therefore the old tyrants instinctively hated such attachments. Therefore ordinary Christianity, which is too often only a Pharisaism that has stolen the outer garments of Jesus, can scarcely approve of such attachments, since they have in them the germs of a sublime antinomianism. Love such as that of Antigone for her brother must always be looked upon with suspicion by ordinary ecclesiastics. The love of Jonathan for David approached too nearly to a perfect fusion of hearts to be approved of by commonplace religionists, with their exaggerated idea of personal responsibility. How could the one go to heaven, if the other went to hell? But to the Christianity of Christ heroic friendships are unspeakably precious. In them are best mirrored the love of Jesus for the human race, that absolute and unconditional love of which ordinary religious teachers know so little. St. Paul also had perceived the great redeeming force of deep and tenacious affections, so that he thought little of the wise, prudential maxims of ordinary moralists, but boldly proclaimed the fact that "love is the fulfilling of the law."

I think also that the more detached spirits know

more of broad benevolence and the larger life of far-ranging sympathy, than more satisfied spirits ever know. These are they so well described in the Bible "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." The chilling poverty of their own lonely hearths drives out these souls to seek a home in the very centre of humanity. To them the noblest and most loving charity is not a superadded duty, but rather an inherent and indispensable necessity. They can only be warmed by *others*, by the reflected light and heat of *their* happiness. Most truly can each of them say, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled." This unselfish and almost impersonal joy is indeed to many "the good part" which they have chosen, and which cannot be taken away from them. It is that profound and abiding blessedness, which is given to some souls instead of happiness. It is as the peace gained at Gethsemane, deeper far than the selfish peace of the old Eden of instinct. It is as the strange joy of Paul forgetting his own personal insignificance, buffetings, and "thorn in the flesh," and living serenely in the sympathetic hearts of his beloved converts. Through this far-ranging sympathy our being is enlarged a thousand-

fold. We are no longer "straitened in our own selves"; we are made one with Nature and with man; and in our sorest personal disasters, even in the waning of our individual capacities, these ever cheer our hearts with the sweet encouraging assurance, "Because we live, thou shalt live also."

The charity or benevolence of detached and unsatisfied souls is far more penetrating, aggressive, and victorious than that of ordinary people. These know human nature in a strangely intimate way. The unsatisfying condition of their own personality has driven them forth, on a long voyage of discovery, to the hearts of their fellow-men. They have watched with keenest interest the throbbing of the most widely different hearts of many nations and of diverse creeds; so that they have learnt something of the one universal language of the deepest emotions of the soul of man. "Parthians, Medes, and Elamites" all hear these sympathetic spirits speaking in their own tongue. These guess men's feelings without being told anything. They read men's inner histories in their eyes, without any aid from their tongues. Like Jesus himself, they answer men's unspoken thoughts, and often disregard entirely their mere words. A sword has pierced the souls of the lonely and isolated, and henceforth "the thoughts of many hearts are revealed." Hence their fellow-men are compelled to be sincere with them.

They have "the terrible gift of familiarity." Men love to be thus adequately understood and interpreted to themselves. This begets complete and unreserved confidence; so that the sinful woman of Samaria for ever cries, "Come, see a man which told me all that ever I did."

But insight alone would not be enough. It is love that begets love. And the love or sympathy of the unsatisfied and lonely is deeper far than that of the happy. The "unmarried" soul "careth for the things of the Lord," for the wide far-reaching interests of collective humanity, for heroic and generous ideas; whereas the "married" soul is too often exclusively occupied in domestic affairs. Spiritual detachment of the higher sort kills egotism down to its very roots; but domesticity often only magnifies it, and does nothing but veneer selfishness with a thin coating of apparent sympathy. The old Satan of selfishness is not essentially changed, but only assumes the garb of an angel of light. Instead of solitary selfishness, we get "*l'égoïsme à deux, à trois, à quatre*" Domesticity often keeps a man away from charity.

Moreover, the charity of the lonely appeals more forcibly to men's hearts, in that it is so completely natural and spontaneous. If we would draw the hearts of others to us, we must first be ourselves irresistibly drawn to others. The grandest and most

aggressive charity is not urged on by any sense of *duty*; it is "not under the law, but under grace." And herein is its real power. Men like to be pitied or loved *for their own sakes*, and not merely out of a sense of duty. Whilst giving men warning tracts in obedience to a sense of duty, religious people often cause men's hearts to close resolutely against them. The gratitude which the sufferers in a hospital feel for those who take care of them out of genuine human sympathy, is of one sort, and the gratitude which they feel for those who help them from a mere sense of duty, is of another and very inferior sort. In order to touch men's hearts, we must to a very great extent identify ourselves with them; their wounds must become our wounds, their perplexities our perplexities, their doubts our doubts, and their sins our sins. Only by being "numbered with the transgressors" can we really "bear away the sins of the many."

And the more solitary and detached souls are, in a quite special and peculiar way, thus identified with collective humanity. Out of their very weakness they are made strong to aid their fellow-men. The sorrows and besetting infirmities of these lonely spirits draw many sinners to them, as the weaknesses of St. Paul drew to him those devoted disciples, whose affection was so great that they were willing even to "pluck out their own eyes," and give them to him.

He who would move the hearts of sinners must frequently lay aside all sense of dignity and all self-sufficiency. He must let sinners see that, in aiding them, it is but as the poor helping the poor. He must let them see that they themselves have much to *give* him as well as to receive from him. He must "stand at the door and knock," as one who would fain procure access into their hearts *for his own sake* as well as for their benefit. Not wise magisterial counsels, but the pathetic cry of the unsatisfied human heart, persuades and pierces men most. The "entreat me not to leave thee" of the isolated human spirit is often far more effective morally than any appeals to a man's wish for personal safety, any well-meant warnings to "flee from the wrath to come." St. Paul's pathos moved his disciples very much more than his arguments ever did. As the tender and sensitive spirit of Jesus hung on the cross between the two thieves, He uttered no wise words of exhortation or of warning ; but His forlorn loneliness and His yearning pity spoke powerfully to the human sympathies of one rough sin-stained heart that throbbed beside Him.

I think, then, that it is clear enough that spiritual loneliness, or detachment, has many compensations and many beneficial effects. It is the school of the truest "sons of consolation," where deep hearts learn the full meaning of that saying of Christ, "It

is more blessed to give than to receive." And in this blessedness even very homely and unintellectual people may genuinely share. The world owes much to many an ungifted and slighted old maid. Of her we may often most truly say that she is "poor, yet making many rich." Such despised ones are often the very salt of the earth. They do the work which no one else is willing to do. They go on helping and loving others, though they might well say with St. Paul, "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." The world would be poor indeed without these its sisters of mercy. And one is glad to think that their recompense of love is only deferred, and will be given to them hereafter, in that far-off land of the divine realities, where the lowliest services of pity shall find their exceeding great reward; when many shall rise up and call it blessed; where desiccated hearts shall have free access to the fountains of unfailing sympathy; where in sober truth it shall come to pass that "the desolate shall have many more children than she that hath a husband."

In the case of the profounder and more intellectual natures, it is easy enough to see that even now in some ways they have a portion of their reward for their sorrow and isolation. Theirs is even now the keenest insight into the mysteries of

the universe, the most thrilling sense of awe, the near presence of the Sublime, the grandest wisdom, the realized proximity of the encompassing God. These see life best, most clearly and impartially, and most as a whole ; therefore are they the wisest counsellors of the race. These have the loftiest conceptions, the most free from provincialism or parochialism. Their detached and broadened minds are the most nearly parallel to the working of the Divine mind. All things are theirs, because they are God's. Disinterestedness enlarges the range of their faculties a thousand-fold ; to some extent they are made partakers of the divine ubiquity. They are not shut up in the four walls of any one system of philosophy. Out of weakness they are made strong intellectually : inconsistency keeps their eyes open, to discern the elements of truth in the most varied and contrary theories. Though they have on earth no permanent intellectual or spiritual home, though they can build no abiding tabernacles or temples for the sacred wisdom of ancient seers ; yet from time to time they are carried away to the loftiest mountains of vision ; they " nestle into the brains " of successive thinkers, and survey the universe from thence. Thus they overlook all definite creeds. Thus out of their personal poverty they are made truly rich, and survey from afar the wondrous glories of the promised land. These are

not lulled or enervated by any Capuan luxuries or weakening opiates of the spiritual world. They prefer prolonged unrest to the torpor induced by mental and moral opiates. They follow the Ideal whithersoever it may lead them. Progress is the very law of their being. The pilgrim's staff and lamp are always ready. These are the truest watchmen in Israel.

Nor are their hearts entirely sad. They pour themselves into others. They live "in lives made better by their presence"; and to live thus, with conscious purpose, is the only divine and eternal life. Though they may take permanent root in none, they live in many hearts. They are "dead"—so far as the life of egotism is concerned—and "their life is hid with Christ in God." To them human affection is not lost or destroyed, but transfigured and glorified. They see all things in God; and there, afar off, in the very heaven of heavens, purged from all earthly dross and freed from all baffling limitations, they descry the divinely radiant form of that deep human love, which was to them in this world at once an epiphany and a grief, a source of unending sorrow, and yet a deeper blessing than any finite joy. There at length shall the weary be at rest, and the aspiring no longer be disappointed. There shall ideal humanity feed and nourish the starved pilgrims driven out of the actual.

There shall sympathy be no longer a tantalizing mirage, but a true fountain of living waters. There the heart shall no longer "know its own bitterness." There solitariness shall be no more. There God shall be in very deed "the Father of the fatherless." There the brotherhood of man shall become a glorious reality. There it shall at last be said with perfect truth, "God setteth the solitary in families, and bringeth out those which are bound with chains."

PITY AND MORALITY : A REPLY TO MR. COTTER MORISON.

LUKE xv., *verses 1 and 2.*

“Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”

I SUPPOSE that in this age, when men's faith in miracles as historical events is so greatly shaken, and when the importance or significance attached to miracles—even if they are credited—is so much diminished, the main strength of Christianity may be said to lie in its elevated and sublime morality, in its regenerating influence on the human heart, and in the powerful motives which it supplies for a pure and benevolent life. To all religions alike we now apply that test by which Jesus advises us to discriminate true from false individual teachers, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” “The God that answereth by fire, let Him be the God; and all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.” Many devout Christians themselves feel that the significance and value of what are commonly called miracles have in past ages been greatly exaggerated. They are

persuaded that the miraculous was only a temporary scaffolding of the Christian temple, and not an abiding portion of it, still less its inner shrine. The so-called miraculous was but an outer covering designed to protect for a time the inner seed of eternal and fruitful truth. The loftiest truth, like its Divine Master, "is not quickened except it die." It must get rid of its old "natural body" with all its attendant signs and wonders, in order that it may acquire the true, real "spiritual body" with all its grander powers and wider activities. External miracles were for spiritual babes, whose faculties were too undeveloped to perceive the far vaster miracles of reason and the soul. Perhaps Nature in earlier ages could only bear witness to moral and spiritual truths by somewhat dramatic or theatrical displays of her power; whereas in these last days our intellects are opened to discern the divine mind immanent in all her processes, so that her abiding laws are to us incomparably more instructive than her rare and unintelligible anomalies.*

Moreover, the long progressive development of man's moral and spiritual faculties has made all things new. "The kingdom of God is within us"; and so we no longer have to seek for it outside. In these last days God speaks to us by His Son, by an ideal and transcendent humanity. Miracles have been transferred from history to the far more mysterious

region of psychology. The working of the Holy Ghost within us makes us comparatively indifferent to all external wonders. Man is to himself the greatest mundane miracle of all. Christianity has migrated from the circumference to the centre of our nature. In many cases an apparent rejection of it is in truth only a more vital receiving of it. Perhaps the deepest modern religion no longer "knows Christ after the flesh"; but it knows Him all the more genuinely and intimately after the spirit. We seek the *eternal* gospel; and that to a great extent has replaced all merely local and provisional manifestations of God. The knowledge of God as essentially spirit makes the temples of Jerusalem and the mountains of Samaria both alike of little value to us.

Amongst the really profound, even the most sceptical thinkers have hitherto paid willing homage to the moral splendour of Christ's religion. Rousseau and John Stuart Mill could genuinely admire its pure and elevated ethics. Mill plainly says that men in general could have no better moral guidance than to act after the example of Jesus. Thus could the abstract principles of the noblest morality be best translated into concrete and definite rules. Even Positivism bears witness to the moral greatness of Christianity, whilst entirely rejecting its supernatural creed. The morality of the "Religion of Humanity" may indeed be said to be a sort of exaggerated Chris-

tianity. It is penetrated by the old sublime teaching as to self-sacrifice. It has a real hold of that fundamental principle of the ethics of Jesus, "He that keepeth his life shall lose it." The "Imitation of Christ" was dear to the soul of George Eliot. I believe that her only objection to the more reasonable forms of existing Christianity was their supposed lack of sufficing evidence. What is Positivism on its moral side but a Christianity that has lost its Lord, and knows not where it may find Him? Futile I think that this new religion is; but **ignoble, inhuman, ungenerous, or ethically anti-Christian**, it certainly is **not**.

But Christianity has recently been attacked in its most vital part, in its morality; and not merely as regards a few of its isolated precepts, but in its very essence. This storm has long been gathering, and now it has at length burst upon us. In the writings of the late W. R. Greg, for instance, we find many premonitory rumblings, as it were, of this menacing thunder and storm; but they passed away without doing us much harm, or even greatly alarming us. Mr. Greg censured current Christianity for preaching the forgiveness of sins, whereas he thought it plain that sin never really is or can be forgiven. Still, Mr. Greg's deeply spiritual nature prevented him to the very last from attacking the inner meaning of the original Christian ethics. This apparent attack arose from a

misapprehension of Christian teaching on this particular subject. The noble parable of the prodigal son was as dear to Mr. Greg as it is to us. There was nothing really harsh or Judaic in his views. He only wished to reconcile the sublime tenderness of religion with the perceived facts of life. But now a really trenchant and relentless attack has been recently made upon the whole moral teaching of Christianity. Mr. Greg thought that our religion needed to be a little qualified and broadened by truths drawn from the worlds of experience and of nature. Mr. Cotter Morison, in his "~~Service~~ of Man," thinks that our religion is, in its very essence, a ~~foe~~ of morality, and that it ought to be altogether abandoned. Mount Ebal, with its withering curses, openly denounces Mount Gerizim. The elder brother, in the much-loved parable, has come back to censure the immoral laxity of the tender-hearted old father. The lord, in another parable, who freely forgave the bankrupt debtor, is openly reprov'd as a wicked person. The moral legalists of the Christian church are held up as models, and St. Paul is proclaimed to have been an antinomian heretic of the most pernicious kind. The Gospel of an infinite pity, so dear to the human heart, is taken away; and the old stony tables of the law are put in its place. Mount Sinai, with its repelling terrors, threatens to cancel the immeasurable pathos of Calvary.

This last attack on the morality of our religion is destined to inevitable failure, and need not alarm us much, for two simple reasons. First, because the indictment of Christianity is crammed with the very grossest and most inexcusable misstatements ; and secondly, because this author's own teaching is in direct and necessary antagonism with almost all the deepest, tenderest, and most generous instincts of normal and unsophisticated humanity. We shall never go back to the ethics of the grudging elder brother in the well-known parable of the prodigal son. All that is most heroic, most affectionate, and most self-sacrificing in man's nature rises up in flat rebellion against Mr. Morison's harsh and unimaginative legality. Friendship mocks at such arid Pharisaism. Such teaching is fundamentally nothing better than a relapse into the unmitigated sternness of the old Judaism. We seem once more to breathe the moral atmosphere of the Book of Leviticus. Our critic would have been for stoning the woman taken in adultery. From him are entirely hidden the beautiful mysteries and the mighty powers of vicarious suffering. His moral creed is as arid and devoid of inspiration as that of the old inoperative Deism, which *seemed* so sensible, and *was* so futile. We cannot have a real "enthusiasm of humanity," if we first banish from men's hearts that infinite compassion which is for ever transcending mere law, which loves to be "numbered with the

transgressors," if thus it may in any degree heal their wounds and bear away their sins. This new anti-Christian moral doctrine can never really prevail. In its essence it is perfectly inhuman and senseless. It is as the blind Pharisees of Scotland reviling Burns. It is, to some extent, as moral equanimity rebuking the unsuccessful struggles of baffled moral aspiration. It is as the prose of religion rebuking its poetry. It is as a narrow utilitarianism reproving the profuse generosity of the sublime. It is as the meagre hearts of the wise virgins, come back to condemn the warm, glowing pity of divinest charity. It is as the voice of a dull pedant inebriated with the latter half of the Ten Commandments.

Let us, then, consider carefully what the true Christian morality is. And first let us examine the gross and palpable misstatements of this vigorous but most unattractive opponent of our religion. Here is one of them. He says: "It is not going too far to say, that the doctrine of all Christians in the final result is antinomian and positively immoral. They do not only not support and strengthen morality as they claim to do; they deliberately reject and scorn it. They place on a level the most virtuous and the most flagitious conduct carried on throughout a long lifetime" (page 92). Again, on page 101, he declares that "all Christians agree in vilipending a moral life and conduct, and placing it below a life of crime, provided

the latter be terminated by an act of repentance and turning to God in time to cheat the devil." Again, on page 104, he says that Christians "are invited, nay entreated, to believe also that it makes absolutely no difference as to their future welfare, whether they lead virtuous lives here below or the most profligate, provided they repent a moment before death." The authorities on which our author bases these monstrous statements are Dr. Pusey, St. Alfonso de Liguori, and Mr. Spurgeon.

Now, in the first place, I think it is clear that even the statements of these supposed authorities admit of a more reasonable meaning than that which Mr. Morison puts upon them. Dr. Pusey's offence seems to consist in having said, "We know not what God may do in one agony of loving penitence for one who accepts his last grace in that almost sacrament of death." Upon which our opponent remarks (page 94), "Thus penitence is everything and morality nothing." Now I should like to know what this critic imagines penitence to be. What *is* penitence but incipient morality? It is the sorrowful homage of the soul, paid to violated morality or disregarded goodness. And, considering how difficult morality often is to our weak nature, *ought* not outraged righteousness, like the father in the parable, to run eagerly to welcome the returning prodigal, "while he is yet a great way off"? And with regard to the

forgiveness of the young nobleman, Ernest—mentioned by St. Alfonso de Liguori—who had committed so many foul crimes, Mr. Morison fails to reflect that it was "*after many years*" of penance (see page 100 of the "Service of Man") that the Virgin Mary announced to him the pardon of his sins and his fitness for death.

With regard to Mr. Spurgeon, his language is no doubt somewhat rhetorical and unguarded (see page 101 of Mr. Morison's book); but I think that any really generous nature might well understand what he meant, and also to a very great extent sympathize with it. I think that many by no means antinomian people will perceive real pathos and deeply moving human love in these words which are so hateful to our stern moralist: "You great sinners shall have no back seats in heaven. There shall be no outer court for you. You great sinners shall have as much love as the best, as much joy as the brightest of saints. You shall be near to Christ," &c. As I read these words of Mr. Spurgeon, I am reminded of the one lost sheep and the keen joy caused to the shepherd by its recovery. I think also of that profoundly true and noble saying of George Eliot: "The tale of the divine pity was never yet believed from lips that were not felt to be moved by human pity"; and it seems to me that the tender-hearted "foolishness" of Mr. Spurgeon is likely to be a far more efficient agent in

moral conversion than the hard, arid platitudes of Mr. Morison's commonplace and Pharisaic "wisdom." If I desire to urge the hearts of my fellow-men to a really moral and noble life, I would rather exaggerate the force of the Creator's love for them than deny it altogether, or deal it out in a niggardly way.

And as for sinners not occupying "back seats" in heaven, we might, perhaps, as well remember that in the ranks of notorious sinners have frequently been for a long time some of the very best of the sons of men. I quite expect that many a struggling outcast will not occupy a "back seat" in heaven; and it is not there that I can hope to find the once sin-stained soul of the great Augustine. Nor am I in the least ashamed to own that, in my opinion, one glorious act of heroism often suffices to redeem sinners from evil, that is, to set them *on the right road* to all that is fair and noble. It is not in any "back seats" in heaven that I should look for those poor, ignorant, and no doubt sinful soldiers who perished for their loyalty in the celebrated wreck of the ship Birkenhead. And Mr. Morison ought also to remember the essential unity of the human race, the one body with many members. So that if there were in heaven any such things as "back seats," one would quite expect to find there, in willing banishment, the most sympathetic and Christ-like saints of all, and to hear a certain one called Paul the aged crying vehemently, as in the

days of old, "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" One thinks also that in those despised "back seats" there might from time to time be found a strange unearthly friend "In form like unto the Son of God"; for He it was who said, "They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick." When Mr. Spurgeon forgets his Calvinism, and preaches of love and not of wrath, I freely own that I think he then does far more to promote the noblest morality than his scornful critic ever does. Certainly I would rather have heard "Dinah Morris" preach, even fanatically, than this recent opponent of our religion lecture with all his wise sagacity.

The last sentence in the passage from Mr. Spurgeon, quoted by Mr. Morison, does indeed seem rather absurd: "Fifty, sixty, seventy years of iniquity shall all disappear as the morning's hoar-frost disappears before the sun." If Mr. Spurgeon means that a long life of sinfulness leaves no traces in the converted soul, his teaching is manifestly erroneous on this point. But I think that he very probably means only that past sins, if repented of, shall be no barrier to the reception of the divine love in its fulness. And one pervading error in our opponent's reasonings is, that he confuses pardon of sin with complete emancipation from its results. Even ordinary current Christianity does not "place on a level the most virtuous and the most flagitious conduct carried

on throughout a long lifetime." Nor is it true that, in ordinary, average, religious teaching, Christians "are invited, nay entreated, to believe that it makes absolutely no difference as to their future welfare whether they lead virtuous lives here below, or the most profligate, provided they repent a moment before death." Popular Christianity plainly admits the fact that there are many widely different degrees of blessedness hereafter, that there are amongst the saved immense differences in spiritual rank and rewards.

In fact this assailant of Christianity is greatly misled by the word "save" and other words of like import. He supposes that salvation means complete and immediate cancelling of a man's whole past life; whereas, as generally used, it means merely the first initial process, the turning a man round, as it were, from darkness to light, the first step of the prodigal son on his journey towards home. In the language of the "Pilgrim's Progress" the word "salvation" is often used to describe a man's flight from the "city of Destruction"; and this by no means implies that he has not a long journey still before him. Our flight from the city of Destruction may be speedy; but our pilgrimage to the "city of God" is long, and often wearisome. Mr. Morison says that our religion affirms that "a long life devoted to sin can be blotted out in a moment by a change in the

sinner's mind " (page 103). In these words "blotted out," or rather in the meaning put upon them, lies the whole fallacy of our opponent's reasoning on this subject. Forgiveness does not necessarily imply the remission of penalties. "And Nathan said unto David, the Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." Mr. Morison seems also to have a very strange idea as to the essential meaning of the process called "salvation." He seems to forget that Christ came professedly to redeem us from iniquity. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." From the most antinomian of the great teachers of early Christianity has come to us that plainest and severest of all moral warnings, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Our recent critic has apparently never heard of this renowned text; or perhaps he thinks it is not severe enough, because we do not improve upon it by adding an assertion that a man shall not reap *anything else besides* what he has sown. But our excuse must be that we adhere to Nature and to facts. As a matter of fact, we all reap much sympathy and help which we ourselves have not sown. And I may add, that we all reap a good deal of evil that we have not personally sown.

But this assailant of Christianity is not content with attacking St. Alfonso de Liguori, Dr. Pusey, and Mr. Spurgeon; he goes on to disparage Christ Himself. He says (page 109), "But the most momentous authority for holding a life of wickedness on earth immaterial, and no impediment to the promptest ascent into heaven, provided an act of contrition has been performed in time, has yet to be cited. It is that of Christ Himself as He hung upon the cross." And then Mr. Morison proceeds to censure Christ for pardoning the penitent thief on the cross. And, in his zeal for morality, he asks, "Yet was he (the thief) punished or made to do penance, to make amends to the society he had injured?" *How* the penitent thief *could*, under the circumstances, in any adequate way, "make amends to the society he had injured," is not explained to us. To some it may well seem that crucifixion was a good deal more than an adequate punishment for theft; and I dare say some of us would not have been at all ashamed to do anything that we could to assuage the agony of the suffering thief. And, as a matter of fact, this repentant sinner *did* what very little he could "to make amends to the society he had injured." He acknowledged his own wickedness, and sought to bring the other thief to a better frame of mind. What more *could* he have done, even to please Mr. Cotter Morison? This strange opponent of our religion says that the con-

trition of the thief, even if admitted to be genuine, ought not to have procured his forgiveness. "Does that (*i.e.*, his contrition), in the least remove the slight which Christ passed upon morality by taking him to Paradise in spite of his past evil life? What did his repentance do to cancel that?" (Page 110.)

I think that our opponent will not find very many to agree with him on this point. To the vast majority it will still certainly appear that the contrition of the dying thief *did* make it morally right that Christ should forgive him. He could not have been altogether bad, or he would not have sympathized so readily with the undeserved sufferings of another. Does our critic mean that no one ought ever to be forgiven until he has really undone all the evil that he has wrought? In this case no one would ever be forgiven at all. And I may add that, if we could really and adequately "cancel" the effects of our past sins, it would not be clear why and for what we should need forgiveness. A man who pays his creditors in full seems scarcely to *need* their pardon. Perhaps also, before condemning Christ so peremptorily, Mr. Morison ought to be in possession of accurate knowledge as to the antecedents of this penitent thief. Perhaps his crimes may have been almost forced upon him. Possibly he may have been like Jean Valjean, whose career of crime began in an act prompted by sympathy for starving relations.

In any case, I think that the common heart of humanity will prefer the moral method of Jesus, and of His true follower Bishop Myriel, to that of the harsh and unrelenting Javert.

Even though we should concede to our present adversary that the religion of St. Alfonso, of Dr. Pusey, and of Mr. Spurgeon is, to some extent, fanatical and morally objectionable, he would not be in the least entitled to make the monstrous assertion that "all Christians agree in vilipending a moral life and conduct, and placing it below a life of crime, provided the latter be terminated by an act of repentance and turning to God in time to cheat the devil" (page 101). Because *some* Christians may be unreasonable, does it follow that *all* are so? Was there ever yet a great moral or religious philosophy, which did not suffer more or less from the unwisdom of some of its adherents? In order to judge any system fairly, we ought to study its more reasonable exponents. And can any one say that the more rational and sober-minded Christians agree in vilipending a moral life and conduct? Why does not Mr. Morison quote any Broad Church teacher on this matter? Because it would be highly inconvenient to him to do so. One very common accusation brought against the whole "Broad" party is that it lays too much emphasis on moral duties, and comparatively neglects dogmas. Did not Christ himself teach plainly that at the final

judgment the most practical beneficence, and not any amount of zeal in propagating religious dogmas, would furnish the test by which He would discriminate His genuine disciples from empty pretenders? "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." This famous passage in St. Matthew's Gospel has in truth been well digested by the more reasonable sort of Christianity, and has been in it the abiding source of unending labours of pity and love towards man.

Our opponent ought to have a little more respect for prominent facts. Could any assertion be more monstrously false than to say that Dr. Arnold of Rugby, or Archbishop Whately "agreed in vilipending a moral life and conduct"? Had Mr. Erskine of Linlathen, and Frederick Denison Maurice no real horror of practical wickedness? Did they "vilipend a moral life and conduct"? Did Charles Kingsley care little or nothing for an upright, manly, and noble life? Was Dean Stanley so zealous in defending minute theological dogmas, that he cared nothing for morality and a good and sympathetic life? Did *he* pay merely a verbal homage to those things which an inspired apostle loved so well, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report"? Do we find much moral laxity in the profoundly

Christian writings of Dr. James Martineau? Was the Christianity of Charles Dickens entirely occupied with doctrines unfavourable to that lofty and noble morality which consists chiefly in justice, mercy, sympathy, and the most practical service even of the very lowest and most insignificant of our race? As a matter of fact, the whole spirit of the broader sort of Christianity is to a very remarkable extent in harmony with the view of Kant, who thought that the essence of religion consisted in the recognition of all our moral duties as divine commands. Has it never occurred to Mr. Morison to reflect on the fact that St. John himself taught plainly enough that it is only through love for man that we really attain to love for God? "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

The book which I am criticizing is indeed a surprising one, in many ways; and I do not think that it would be at all fair to take it as a representation of the entire school of Positivists. The author's Judaic harshness is all his own. His attitude towards sinners is exactly opposite to that which we find in the writings of George Eliot. The famous and pathetic story, "Janet's Repentance," is entirely pervaded by the merciful tolerance of the deep, wise saying, that, with regard to almost all human sins and errors, "to understand everything is to forgive every-

thing." It is certainly strange that one supposed to be especially devoted to the service of man should be so hard and unpitying to man. In reality, this friend of man damns the mass of mankind in a far more unsparing manner than any ordinary religious people would, so far as this life is concerned. His moral teaching is eminently suited to beget despair in the hearts of ordinary men. We must remember that sinners constitute by far the larger portion of our race; and consequently that, if we would indeed serve humanity, we must condescend to serve the wicked; and these we shall never redeem by unsparing condemnation. The "neither do I condemn thee" of Jesus must be audible, as a kind of abiding undertone, in all our addresses to sinners, or else they will never really listen to the wise warning, "Go, and sin no more." It is also strange that such moral severity should proceed from a teacher who absolutely denies to man any real freedom of will. Mr. Morison says (page 293), "The sooner the idea of moral responsibility is got rid of, the better it will be for society and moral education." Well, if moral responsibility is a fiction, severity of moral judgment, as regards sinners, is obviously unjust. We might as well apply the thunderings on Mount Sinai to a flock of sheep.

Towards the close of his book, this rigid moralist seems to become aware that his methods are not very

likely to be efficacious in redeeming sinners from their evil ways. He says (page 295), "Nothing is gained by disguising the fact that there is no remedy for a bad heart, and no substitute for a good one." It is instructive to contrast this melancholy conclusion with the refreshing hopefulness that pervades the teaching of Jesus, "They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick." "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The religion of Christ is emphatically an appeal to sinners, and a plan for healing, cleansing, and elevating them. It dares to promise them that God *will* find a remedy for bad hearts; that He will take away their stony hearts, and give them new and more plastic hearts. Religion dares to deal with a moral leprosy which its recent adversary can only denounce and scorn. It is not clear exactly what he would do with the bad. In one passage (page 293) he seems to propose exterminating them. He says, "The sooner shall we come to the conclusion that the welfare of society demands the suppression or elimination of bad men, and the careful cultivation of the good only." Now, considering that sinners constitute the immense majority of the race, it is not clear *how* they are to be "eliminated." Nor is it any easier to see how they are to be prevented from having children, as Mr. Morison seems to propose. He says, "The bad man has no conscience; he acts after his

malignant nature. His mind is made up to choose the bad. But society, knowing its own interests, has a right to exclude him from its fellowship; not only to prevent and punish his evil actions, but to suppress him in some effectual way, and, above all, prevent his leaving a posterity as wicked as himself" (page 294). *How* this desirable object is to be accomplished our moralist does not tell us. And perhaps the physiologists and the doctors might possibly have something to say against this highly moral plan. For the wilder and more sinful specimens of humanity often have a far finer physique than that of the saints. From the loins of fierce barbarians have sprung many of the very grandest of our race. In pulling up the "tares" of sinful tendencies, we might very often pull up also the "wheat" of the loftiest heroism and the most vivid spontaneity and fervour.

Perhaps this stern teacher's ideal state might be a little cold-blooded and feeble. Perhaps the Christian plan is a better one. "Let both grow together until the harvest." It may even be that sinners help saints sometimes, that the sin-stained but daring heart of heroism is a refuge and a source of strength, in times of weakness and despondency, to pure souls that venture to love it. And the love of saints for sinners does more real good than any attempt to exterminate the wicked. It may be that St. John was practically wiser than Mr. Morison when he went forth to search

sorrowfully, but hopefully, for the young robber who had been converted, and had then relapsed into his evil ways during the apostle's absence. The beautiful old story tells us that St. John's real affection for the young sinner—of which he was in no way ashamed—turned out entirely victorious from a moral point of view, whereas hatred, breathing out threats of extermination, might have led to a very different result. The very weakness of St. John was a greater spiritual force than any rigour of an unsparing moralist could have been.

I do not think that any one who has inwardly digested the beautiful moral teaching of that admirable book, "*Ecce Homo*," is likely to be much disturbed by this recent attack on the moral side of our religion. In that famous book we are indeed in a totally different spiritual atmosphere. There we "are not under the law, but under grace;" there we perceive plainly enough that morality is not really best propagated by mere moralists; there we find that the true office of the best religion is not to "suppress or eliminate" sinners, but rather, first to interest them, and then to interpret them to themselves, and to cool the fever in their blood by the soothing medicine of a penetrating and large-hearted sympathy, and to show them an ideal which may be genuinely attractive to many of their deepest instincts. The religion of Christ is a religion of profoundest pity; it is ever

seeking to extract the poison from the wounded human heart, and cares not to denounce humanity as incurable. It knows how to soothe and calm even the fierce demoniacs of the moral world. It is not afraid of the lawless; for it knows that these often have in them the germs of something far higher than any compliance with mere law. As the author of "Ecce Homo" wisely observes, "He who has no law may still have a master; he who is incapable of justice may be capable of fidelity; he who understands little, may have his sins forgiven because he loves much."

Perhaps we may express the difference between Mr. Morison's moral methods and those of original Christianity by saying that the former relies entirely on the prose of religion, and the latter chiefly on what we may call its poetry. The one is always looking at facts or results, the other deals more with imagination and the marvellous undeveloped potentialities of the human soul. Hence the moral tone of Christianity is far the more hopeful of the two. It has been down into well-nigh the lowest hell of human nature, and found God "there also." Christianity has a way of ignoring the apparent and superficial aspects of a man's nature, and of glancing down into its unseen depths. Provided that a man has not become a tiger or an ape, the religion of Jesus has very much to say to him, however sinful he may be. This religion

penetrates through layer after layer of evil, with its foul incrustations of sinful habits, till at last it comes to the very root of the man's being, the idea of the man, that for which he was made, that which was once in the Creator's judgment deemed "very good." And to this man within the man Christianity makes its appeal. It opens the eyes of the spiritually blind to discern their real inmost nature, till at last they see that evil cannot truly be their good, that the very attractiveness of evil consists in its being a sort of imitation of what is good. The Bible seems to hint at this truth when it declares that the serpent originally misled men by promising that they "should be as gods." Somewhere, hidden in the recesses of almost every human sinner's heart, is a kind of mire-stained ideal, or a sort of distorted shadow of some truly noble ideal. The very fact that the prodigal son feeds on the husks fit for swine attests the abiding hunger of a divine discontent. Many forms of sin are essentially nothing but the blind wanderings of blameless or noble instincts that have lost their way. Nature abhors a vacuum. If a man has nothing good to feed upon, he must feed on something bad ; and the more fervent his nature is, the more greedily he will often feed.

Christianity, like its Founder, "knowing all that is in man," the hidden good as well as the apparent evil, is full of encouragement and hope for sinners. As I have

said already, it utterly rejects our adversary's despairing assertion, that "there is no remedy for a bad heart." Our religion believes in genuine moral inspiration of man by man ; whereas our opponent knows only of instruction. No amount of instruction will enable a paralytic of the moral world to take up his bed and walk ; whereas the mighty inspiration of a fervent enthusiasm often works this miracle. Faith in the ineradicable potentialities of man's nature often removes mountains of difficulties. The gospel is more potent than the law. Sympathy and love often illuminate by their sunlight the dark caverns of sinful hearts, and thus many a time disclose to a despairing outcast rich moral and spiritual treasures of his own inner nature, of which he knew nothing hitherto. When our Lord revealed her whole inner being to the wondering, sinful woman of Samaria, I doubt not that her vision was of much latent good in her heart, as well as of much unrecognized evil. Real religion is not always scolding or depressing the wicked. Full often, as it gazes on the soul of some despised outcast, it is heard exclaiming, like Paul to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee." Profound feelings often lead men and women astray ; yet are they a splendid gift.

Though original Christianity is certainly not immoral, its method of teaching morality is widely different from that of ordinary moralists. It sees

plainly that we must sympathize with sinners first, and only afterwards proceed to instruct or guide them. We must "eat and drink with publicans and sinners," if we would learn what their ways are, and so induce them to come and listen to us. From mere condemnation the sinful souls that we would influence instinctively withdraw themselves ; but they are often willing enough to listen to words of intelligent comprehension and sympathetic interpretation. Not by law can we redeem the lawless. Forgiveness often melts hearts which punishment would only harden. Sullenness is best removed by inspiring hope. The very root of much moral defiance and rebellion is the belief that God and religious people are unreasonable and harsh. Hence the best remedy is found in a clear exhibition of the divine equitableness and pity. Who can count the number of erring and sin-stained hearts that have been moved to their inmost depths by the divine wisdom uttering these grand old words of abiding fairness and compassion, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"? Words like these have a penetrating and piercing power never found in any mere denunciation ; so that the wandering soul often listens with eager gladness, and says, concerning that God whom Jesus preached, "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and

passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities. And Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

No moralist ever really served morality half so efficiently as Jesus did. Other moral teachers could only make the good a little better; He has often made the bad good. Christ relied on the strangely aggressive force of moral and spiritual genius; ordinary moral teachers have relied on moral talent with its wise maxims gathered by prolonged experience. And the genius of Christ has best interpreted the human heart with its inherent paradoxes, and best ministered to its wants. As the body without the soul is dead, so religion or morality, without enthusiasm and personal loyalty, is weak and inoperative. The poetry of humanity has proved itself a mightier power than all its prose; beauty evokes stronger feelings than utility ever does; in the spiritual world Orpheus is more persuasive than Draco or Bentham. Friendship moves sinners more than any number of moral sign-posts. The "violent" take the kingdom of heaven by force. For thousands of fervent natures love is the only possible fulfilment of the law.

In His vivid realization of this truth was the chief

moral power of Jesus. Therefore, He drew to Himself and to goodness many of the wicked, whom teachers like Mr. Morison would fain "suppress or eliminate." Hence arose what has ever seemed to me the most striking and suggestive scene in the whole New Testament, and the grandest exhibition of moral power that the world has ever known. "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him." One knows not which to wonder at most, that preacher, that discourse, or that audience. All alike were probably unique in the annals of the world. The wonders wrought by Orpheus were but emblems of those mightier wonders of the moral world. It would require the genius of a Victor Hugo to depict aright that strange, hopeful gathering of spiritual outcasts. All that we can do is to glance at a few of its aspects. There, drawn irresistibly by the powerful magnetism of the genius of Jesus, met in transient fellowship a veritable miscellany of vice. There met, to hear this wonderful preacher, vice in almost every stage, vice that was as yet hardly vice at all, vice growing rapidly hardened, and vice that had well-nigh cast off all semblance of humanity. The young, the middle-aged, and the old, all were there; the young, whose sinfulness was in many cases not much more than an eager, vehement curiosity; the middle-aged, whose wickedness was often a dreary routine of well-nigh soulless covetousness; and the old,

whose withered imaginations and palsied faculties might well seem to render them impervious to all lofty teaching, even as "the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears, and refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." There also were gathered many of the demoniacs of the moral world, whose dwelling was amongst the dark tombs of hopeless remorse, fierce with all the implacable fierceness of the bitterest despair. There, too, were the world's thieves and murderers, and other criminals of divers sorts. Through dull, bleared eyes, degraded and lost humanity of every sort gazed with strange wonder at the ideal man come to show it from what heights it had fallen. And saddest, far saddest of all for Jesus to see, there were gathered living wrecks of the very noblest materials, splendid abortions of the moral world; there were the profoundest human affections grovelling in the mire of sensuality; there was heroism enslaved by vice; there was the sorrowing heart of aspiration well-nigh strangled by circumstances; there was the sacred soul of soaring holiness crushed by the deadly grip of a tyrannous organization. In the hearts of these last forlorn and almost involuntary sinners, Christ doubtless heard the old despairing cry of those who had suffered long, "If thou canst do anything, help us."

We are not told with what words of penetrating

wisdom and love our Saviour ministered to this wonderful gathering of minds and hearts diseased. But some of us can guess a little as to what Jesus must have said. Once more Orpheus subdued the hearts even of the fiercest. In imagination we can almost discern some of the moral transformations of that immortal scene, as the beast died out of wicked hearts, and the man gleamed forth once more with calm and tranquil eyes. Then were the unsealed fountains of tears more blessed than the waters of Jordan to leprous Naaman. "He smote the stony rock, and the water gushed out." Hard, numbed hearts of habitual transgressors began to feel faint throbbings of life full of an unwonted pain. Then those "dead in trespasses and sins" were quickened once more, and even the selfish felt, beneath the grisly ribs of moral death, the first faint stirring of the soul of sympathy. Then young hearts recognized their own ignorance and errors, and turned with deepest allegiance to Him who was more truly man than they were. Then profound human affections arose out of the mire of sensual lusts, and craved once more for their true aliment, "the bread that came down from heaven." Then thieves were moved to think of their earlier and happier days, and knew once more that wisdom is better than the meanness of cunning. Then hatred shuddered at the terrific unveiling of its own abhorred hideousness.

Then, too, the recklessness of moral despair passed away. The prisoner in the iron cage heard of one who "hath smitten the gates of brass, and broken the bars of iron in sunder." Then the most unsuccessful strugglers found strength to believe that their redemption was but deferred, and not abandoned. Then this wondrous gathering was ready to depart in peace, for it had seen God's great salvation. Then all these restless hearts bowed down together, before the supreme glory of God's unveiled compassion, and listened gladly to the tender farewell words of the all-comprehending Pity: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Let not the followers of Jesus ever own that "there is no remedy for a bad heart." Now, as in the ancient days, "the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save." Many of the victories of Jesus are yet to come. Deep human sympathy can never really abandon its old search for the lost sheep of our race. It ever nourishes the very widest and grandest hope for man on that soul-cheering promise, "I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh." "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people."

In our days two celebrated writers, Victor Hugo

and Charles Reade, have, in widely different ways, exhibited clearly the superior moral efficacy of the method of Jesus as compared with that of harsher teachers of goodness. One rather wonders whether Mr. Cotter Morison has ever thought of Jean Valjean. One can almost hear this harsh moralist pouring out the vials of his scorn over the saintly Bishop Myriel for his tenderness to this great sinner. But the sympathetic "foolishness" of the Bishop was justified by the results. His gracious "Neither do I condemn thee" lingered on in the outcast's heart throughout his whole life, and became the most powerful incentive to "go and sin no more." And when, in some higher world, in the nearer presence of Christ Himself, the soul of this gentle guide perhaps saw his redeemed sinner "bearing and carrying" his fellow-man through the loathsome sewers of Paris, he would be well satisfied with the way in which he had treated the fierce outcast, and might well express his thankfulness for the result in the words of St. Paul, "Love never faileth."

In Charles Reade's story, "It is Never Too Late to Mend," we may also perceive plainly the great moral power of sympathy and forgiveness. Happy indeed was it for the prisoners in that hateful gaol that they had not a mere moralist for their chaplain, but rather a follower of Jesus, who had learnt of Him to discern clearly "the soul of goodness in things evil." One

can almost imagine our opponent sympathizing with the detestable governor, and reproving the mildness of the chaplain. But, in reality, there can be no kind of doubt as to the best way of dealing with the wicked. The great thing to do is to get them to believe in goodness; and that can never be done by denunciation alone. "The tale of the divine pity was never yet believed from lips that were not felt to be moved by human pity." Enlightenment is more truly remedial than force. It is wiser to encourage a man's better nature to come forth from unconsciousness, and begin to think and live, than merely to put manacles on his lower nature. If we treat men as utter brutes, they will never become genuinely human. Our best plan is, in the vast majority of cases, to let sinners learn a little of the joys of normal and blameless activity, and of the pleasures of helping others. It is hopeless work to try to reform a man, if one never lets him do a useful, kind, or friendly action. By prolonged disuse men's higher faculties become atrophied. Prolonged solitary confinement, with enforced inactivity, is a futile and detestable invention; and not less futile and detestable is that banishment of sinners from the sympathy of the good, which some now think to be the method suggested by the deepest moral wisdom.

We Christians are not in the least ashamed of our old method of reasonableness, sympathy, and

affection towards sinners. Again and again we will say to each erring soul that has really become disgusted with itself, "Neither do I condemn thee." We remember that *his* love to his Master was the greatest "to whom much was forgiven." We altogether deny that we "make void the law through faith," that we slight morality by our hopeful sympathy. We maintain, on the contrary, that we most effectually "establish" the moral law, and make it operative. We maintain that it is wise to make men thoroughly human first, and moral only afterwards; and this we say in the real interest of morality itself; for the noblest morality ever speaks to each individual man in the old words of the divine command, "My son, give me thy heart." Neither a mechanical conformity nor an enforced respectability is genuine morality. Wide-hearted religion ultimately moralizes many. Has unsparing condemnation ever moralized one single soul in the depths of its being? Probably it has not. If we would save "the multitude," we must first "have compassion on the multitude," with all its manifold sins and errors. If we will not "eat and drink with publicans and sinners," and even accept kindnesses of various sorts from them, we shall never get at their hearts. I think that the seer in the Apocalypse spoke wisely when he told us that "before the throne" of the great Creator he saw "a multitude which no man

could number, of all nations and kindreds and people," who had "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," that is, in the blood of a profound and self-sacrificing human sympathy. And I think that this great seer was equally right in what he *does not* tell us. As regards the victories of unsparing moral severity, which would force each man to bear without help his own burden, he is wisely silent. Before the great white throne of the celestial purity the seer saw not even one redeemed outcast (still less a great multitude that no man could number), who had "washed his robes" in the curses of the law, or "made them white" in the half-frozen blood of an unpitying and inhuman Pharisaism.

THE BONDAGE AND THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

I.

PHILIPPIANS ii., *part of verse 12, and verse 13.*

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

THE broader sort of religion, though seemingly the home of paradoxes, is really the reconciler of contending and partial truths. To it, as to David in the cave Adullam, are gathered “every one that is discontented,” that is, all truths unable to find satisfactory recognition and expression elsewhere. Thus, religion is strong, by reason of the apparently lawless hospitality with which it receives the inexplicable and puzzling facts or doctrines rejected by philosophy, because deemed incapable of being welded into a symmetrical whole. “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.” “The Lord doth build up Jerusalem.” And how? “He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.” And

the result often is that religion, like mixed races, conquers by means of its diverse and heterogeneous elements. The most glorious and widely operative of all truths are often rejected by philosophers for the sake of consistency.

And so it seems to me that it has happened with regard to the rival theories of the bondage and the freedom of the will. Deep religion accepts the elements of truth in both theories, and is nourished thereby. It has the courage, the elasticity, and the buoyant energy derived from faith in freedom, and also the humility and carefulness more naturally associated with the theory of the subjection of the will, when reasonably stated. And thus the children of religion grow fat on paradoxes, and strong through apparent inconsistencies. The moral miracles thus wrought by religion are at once an annoyance and a source of bewilderment to philosophers.* As we contemplate the comparative moral efficacy of the coherent "wisdom" of Seneca, and the incoherent "foolishness of God" preached by St. Paul, we instinctively assign the palm to religion. And an unprejudiced philosopher, casting his eyes over the wide field of loftiest human culture, might well exclaim to religion, in the language of one of old, "What have I now done in

* For some further remarks on this subject, see my sermon on "The strangeness of the spiritual life," in my book, "The Unknown God."

comparison of you? Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?" It seems as if the Infinite abhorred systems, as if it ever loved to lurk in the mazes of apparent inconsistencies; as if God had "chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."

In our age it seems to many as if a monstrous and exaggerated form of truth had become a sort of Apollyon, threatening the very existence of genuine morality. Necessitarianism, deprived of its ancient sovereignty in the realm of religion, now haunts man's moral nature. Calvinism is practically dead; but its ghost walks about in the world, clad in the garments of philosophy. And it is always difficult to deal with a ghost. Our grim old enemy, predestinarianism, was thoroughly human in some respects. It came of the lineage of earthly kings; it was but a sort of baptized despotism. Men understood, even whilst they shuddered at, its arbitrary ways. But our present enemy is more difficult to understand and meet. Formerly men did but "wrestle against flesh and blood," against a colossal and unsparing man, whilst resisting the terrors of predestinarianism set in array. The terrific God of Calvinism was only a magnified man, and therefore to some extent both intelligible and placable. His very caprice seemed to modify the oppressiveness of his sway. He might suddenly choose to be our friend. But now all is changed. We have to

wrestle against unknown and unearthly "principalities and powers." The kingdom of the devil is within us, and no longer threatening us from outside. We have, as it were, exchanged a remote, though menacing, cloud of darkness for a very real and present nightmare, which well-nigh stifles the soul's breath. Our own misdirected mental activity has called into being a monster, like that of Frankenstein, which dogs all our steps. Such is scientific Necessitarianism, as compared to the horrors of predestinarianism or the mischievous activity of Satan. After all, though Satan might torment and ruin the soul, there was one thing that he could not do; he could not turn it into a machine. That dismal triumph was reserved for certain philosophers and men of science. Truly the foes of humanity are often those of its own house.

This ghost of Calvinism, modern Necessitarianism, is subtle indeed, and well knows how to deceive even the very elect. It has learnt much additional craftiness in its disembodied state. It now penetrates through bolts and doors of resistant individuality which formerly barred it out. The strong man armed, keeping watch over his palace, strives in vain; for the enemy has obtained access to the citadel, and from thence overwhelms him with weapons stolen from his own armory.

This subtle ghost amply avenged itself on John Stuart Mill for his fierce resistance to it when in-

carnate in religion. It made him "altogether bless" what he had set out to curse. What Mill denounced as "priest" he has loved as "presbyter." He stripped from predestinarianism its outer robe of imperial authority, and thought that he had humbled it in the dust for ever; but he has done his best to confer on its bloodless and unfeeling ghost a glorious resurrection to unending power. He has spiritualized despotism, and thereby vastly increased its influence. The "iron" no longer fetters the body, but it has entered into the soul of man. Prometheus might defy the tyranny of a hostile god, but he struggles vainly in the coils of an omnipresent and all-strangling mechanism.

This internal despotism seeks to be at once far more crushing and far more widely dominant than the old tyranny of Calvinism. As we contrast its empire with that of the old menacing religion, the ancient language of a Hebrew psalmist might well serve to express our deep sense of its aggressive and enduring universality: "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations"; "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness (the hitherto tameless instincts of a nomadic spontaneity) shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust." It would be better

to kill or mutilate man's body than to turn his soul into mechanism. One recalls the sad words of the struggling Carlyle: "To me the universe was all void of life, of purpose, of volition, even of hostility; it was one huge, dead, immeasurable steam-engine rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb. O the vast, gloomy, solitary Golgotha, and mill of death! Why was the living banished thither—companionless, conscious?" It is indeed a doubtful service to man to take away his fetters, and smite him with creeping paralysis instead. If the soul is to be gradually desiccated of all spontaneity and all inspiration, it might be better to be turned at once into a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife.

The only way to get rid of a spectre is to face it boldly, and hear what it has to say. Let us, then, proceed to interrogate this threatening ghost, modern Necessitarianism. And then I think that we shall find that it is less formidable than we supposed; that it is an unnatural exaggeration of natural truth; that it arises from a partial and distorted vision of real and existing facts; that it is, as it were, one severed limb of the fair body of truth setting itself up as a complete organism, and then finding in its own monstrous and abnormal condition a sad prophecy of coming destruction for the organism as a whole. It is as if, in some piece of human handiwork, a needful check should transform itself into a menacing obstacle. It is almost

as if the critical or analytic faculties in man should annihilate his constructive faculties ; as if prudence should strangle imagination ; as if the honest fidelity of a pioneer, warning us of the difficulties and dangers of the "promised land," should be turned into a timorous denial that any such land can ever be entered by us.

Mere Necessitarianism, ignoring the mighty power of the immanent God within us, is as the companions of Caleb, who said despairingly of the hostile men of Canaan, "We be not able to go up against the people ; for they are stronger than we." "And they brought up an evil report of the land, which they had searched, unto the children of Israel." These men declared of Canaan, that it was "a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof ;" just as Mr. Herbert Spencer teaches that the "promised land" of perfected virtue will at length swallow up in mechanicalness the sublime aspirations of the pilgrim soul. These pessimistic pioneers also declared that, compared to the inhabiting giants, "We were in our own sight as grasshoppers ; and so we were in their sight." Genuine religion, on the other hand, is as Caleb, not repulsed or terrified by realized and manifest obstacles. These suggest a wary activity, rather than a despondent sluggishness ; so that Caleb says, "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." Prophets are often more hopeful than

their servants or ordinary men. As at Dothan, the lower and more mundane nature ever cries, "Alas, my master, how shall we do?" But the keener vision of the prophet sees the mountain full of the horses and chariots of the spiritual world, and so knows full well that the Ideal is essentially mightier than the earthly and the actual, that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them." "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Necessitarianism, so far as it is true at all, is an exaggeration of some actually existing facts of our moral and spiritual nature. And the best and deepest religion thoroughly recognizes, and at times even vehemently emphasizes, these important and abiding facts. The weakness and the powerlessness of man have been a favourite subject with religious teachers throughout the world. Probably no Atheistic teacher ever realized so profoundly man's moral incapacity as the Christian Pascal did. His soul was moved to its very depths by the amazing contrast between man's Godlike aspirations and his abject poverty of performance. He was, as it were, driven to religion by the bitter irony of Nature tantalizing and mocking the deep yearnings of the human spirit. To Pascal the Infinite was no spiritual luxury, but an absolute moral necessity, the one only possible reconciler of man's inherent contrarieties, the one only strengthener of man's otherwise incurable weakness. Only by sub-

jection to religion could man be delivered from the cruel bondage of many masters. Only through the lowly porch of self-renunciation could man enter into the peaceful temple of spiritual freedom. Man's inner being was essentially a paradox ; he was but a frail reed, and yet a reed that thinks. The germ of freedom in our nature was simply this, our capacity to attach ourselves to the Infinite. We could at least touch the hem of its mysterious garment.

Great indeed are the concessions which the pro-founder sort of religion always makes, consciously or unconsciously, to Necessitarianism in its more reasonable forms. The deepest piety is never Arminian. Saints agree with Necessitarian philosophers in minimizing the idea of merit as applied to human goodness. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give the praise." "By the grace of God I am what I am," says St. Paul, freely owning that he was not "meet to be called an apostle." "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine." This latter text well expresses the essentially dependent and receptive nature of the soul, so far as real life and holiness are concerned. And it is quite in harmony with the teaching of modern science, which regards our social instinct and its adequate development as the real root of all goodness in man.

But Atheistic science and religion differ widely as

to the cause of man's moral powerlessness. Necessitarianism teaches that man is not free, because he is a cunningly contrived machine ; and spontaneity is contrary to the very idea of a machine. In the view of scientific Necessitarianism temperament decides everything ; a man cannot in any degree escape from the tyranny of an organism inherited from his ancestors. Religion teaches that man is not free, because his nature is as yet only in the making, and he now therefore suffers all the pains and disadvantages incidental to the gradual development of rudimentary faculties. Man now wanders between two worlds, the old well-stored Egypt of instinctive animality and the far-off "promised land" of reason's glorious self-control. Hence, by producing moral disquietude, strife, and agony, religion often seems a foe to peace and freedom. It brings "not peace, but a sword." The tree of knowledge is not the tree of life. Reason in its incipient state of development seems to be the author of discord and vacillation ; resolution often seems to grow weaker as thought grows stronger. The wild and lawless Elijah of a mysterious inspiration often greatly "troubles" the conventional Israel of a well-ordered mechanicalness. The sad experience of St. Paul is common enough ; "I was alive without the law once ; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died."

The grandest literature of religion throughout the

world is one long array of authorities against the proud doctrine of the entire freedom of the human will. An earthly and half-mechanical respectability may dream its dream of self-sufficiency and freedom ; but the scarred soul of Israel had learnt its own essential dependence. Only by invoking the Infinite can man be freed from the galling fetters of aboriginal animalism. And, when thus called up, the Infinite must do with us as it pleases. We are no longer "our own." We are often borne "whither we would not." The God-haunted are the noblest of the human race, and yet in some ways the most enslaved. But, of course, this divine servitude is widely different from the slavery of mechanism. To be borne, as it were, on angels' wings is one thing ; to be caught in the fetters of a mindless machine is quite another thing. In the one case we are as the "morning-stars" singing together for joy as they recognized the sublime orderliness of the Creator's laws ; in the other case we are as Circe's dehumanized and degraded swine.

Profound religion, however, is for the most part full of present sadness, as it contemplates man's inherent weakness. The disease of our moral nature is nigh at hand, whereas the remedy often seems far off. And so we sometimes feel inclined to murmur against religion as a Moses who has led us from the old home of an instinctive plenteousness, to die here in the

wilderness of abortive efforts. As Emerson remarks, "Our faith comes in moments ; our vice is habitual." Our prayers often seem mocked or cancelled by our actions. Looking to the actual in man, we might judge that he is a half-starved slave ; looking to the ideal towards which man so slowly progresses, we should say that he is after all a very hopeful candidate for freedom, learning the alphabet of a loftier knowledge and a grander goodness. Our freedom often seems but as the occasional holiday excursion of the inhabitants of a workhouse. The "iron" that has entered into the soul goes with us, as we go forth to our brief holiday. Sometimes we almost dread the strange, unwonted joys of spontaneity. As we dip ourselves in the boundless ocean and the mighty waves of freedom, we often clutch timidly at the familiar hand of our constraining schoolmaster, custom. Our hearts know well the deep abiding significance of those saddening words of the prophet Jeremiah, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." And so we often cry, in response to the prophet's lofty melancholy, "Order my steps in Thy word ; and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me" ; "Keep me as the apple of the eye ; hide me under the shadow of Thy wings" ; "O Lord, why hast Thou made us to err from Thy ways, and hardened our hearts from Thy fear ?" We often feel too weak to

be intrusted with the perilous gift of freedom. Our wills are our own to make them God's. At its present stage of development, free will often seems as if it were but as the rash self-confidence of the prodigal son leaving the father's care, and setting up an independent home for himself.

But a still sadder concession remains to be made to the teachers of Necessitarianism. Our small possession of a strictly limited and God-protected freedom is not always really secured to us. What measure of freedom we may have purchased with the "great sum" of prolonged and painful endeavours is occasionally taken away from some of us in a manner that appears unfair. Our ancestors come back to mock and injure us. Inherited evil, latent through many years, suddenly breaks out with volcanic violence, and devastates the garden of the soul, in which the sweet flowers of careful culture are beginning to bloom. Or, at the very best, the "wild grapes" of ancestral lawlessness grow up in our spiritual vineyard, where we had a right to expect the far finer "grapes" of the spiritual life. And the disappointed soul naturally exclaims, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

It is a strange and saddening fact of our moral life, that a man sometimes acts in a manner totally at

variance with his established character. Hence perhaps, to some extent, arose the theory of demoniacal possession, to account for this otherwise inexplicable fact. Science, having wholly discarded the devil, accounts for the fact in another way, viz., by its teaching as to heredity. But the fact remains a fact of far-reaching import, in whatever way we may explain it, either by demoniacal possession, or by the influence of latent inherited qualities. And of course it is, wheresoever it manifests itself, absolutely fatal to the theory of a perfectly free will. As Emerson says, "How shall a man escape from his ancestors?"

I may also remark that this fact is equally fatal to the pretensions of those philosophers who would map out the future of each soul after an inspection of its present condition, who aspire to make psychology an exact science, free from all the perturbations of inexplicable and incalculable elements. The influence of heredity is often far too subtle to be calculated upon at all. It is needless to say that the demons of inherited ancestral evil know how to lurk in the recesses of our souls, without making any distinctive bumps on our heads. And psychology is often no more successful in detecting them than phrenology is. Is is as if angels came to strengthen us in our moral agonies, and demons came to mislead us in our pilgrimage. This truth does not prove our freedom; but it does tend greatly to lessen the

oppressiveness of our subjection, and to discredit the claims of psychology to be an exact and dogmatic science. Collective humanity, or our innumerable and miscellaneous ancestors, at least works favourably to us in one way ; it delivers us from the nightmare of individualistic mechanism. This multiplicity and variety of ancestral influences come to us from an unseen source, and greatly modify the working of our individual temperaments. These fresh, confluent streams of new impulses, coming to us from far-off and inaccessible mountains of the moral world, at least deliver us from the stagnation and monotonous torpor of rigidly fixed temperament. They prevent our souls from being frozen over or turned into pillars of salt. They are as angels "troubling" the waters of each man's individual or parochial pond.

It would not be true to say, that belief in the occasionally devastating influence of latent inherited qualities is fatal to assiduous moral culture. For, as we have just said, this latent influence of heredity often operates in a way highly favourable to our best interests. Spiritual tempests are often beneficial in the long run. God often brings lasting good out of terrific evil. Sometimes a devastating spiritual tornado sweeps away a vast mass of paltriness, self-conceit, and meanness, which were stifling the soul's diviner life. Truly the soul is often "saved, yet so as by fire." The fire of temptation often gives a man

two grand fundamental virtues, self-knowledge and humility. As Miss Cobbe teaches, "In hearts ploughed by contrition there often bloom fairer spiritual flowers than ever grew in the hard, unbroken ground of self-content." And thus, in a very real and adequate way, God often fulfils the old promise, "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten." Besides, we must always remember that immense allowance will be made for souls overcome by the irresistible floods of resurgent evil instincts, pouring down upon them from the hidden mountains of ancestral conduct. Every man will, *in the end*, be treated with perfect equity and fairness. "There are last which shall be first."

We ought to exercise the same common sense and prudence in moral culture as we do in the cultivation of the earth. Farmers are not hindered from sowing the fields by the inexact nature of the science of meteorology, or by the admitted possibility of occasional, unforeseen, and incalculable outbursts of natural forces. It is enough for us to know that, in a general way, or in the long run, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," in the moral as well as in the physical world. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." For the most part, we must guide our steps by

studying, carefully the ordinary ways of Nature and of God.

Lastly, I wish to observe that Christianity strives to instil into its disciples all the moral carefulness, prudence, and sobriety of mind, which are more naturally associated with a feeling of our own weakness than with a feeling of our own strength. Christianity knows well the real element of truth in the doctrine of the bondage of the will. Our religion, when reasonably expounded, in no way "masks or implicitly denies the paramount importance of habit," as Mr. Cotter Morison accuses it of doing (see his "Service of Man"). On the contrary, some of the very gravest and saddest passages in all moral or religious literature are those in which Hebrew or Christian teachers dwell upon the severer aspects of the law of habit. At times their tone seems well-nigh hopeless, as they contemplate the terrible inveteracy of sinful habits. Thus Jeremiah mournfully exclaims, as he gazes on the moral putrescence of his own nation, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." And this melancholy moral tone pervades almost all the utterances of the grander Hebrew prophets. The keen perception of the exceeding difficulty of overcoming hereditary sinfulness, when hardened into habit, expressed itself through the yearning and baffled spirit of pessimistic Elijah, when

in the wilderness under a juniper tree "he requested for himself that he might die ; and said, It is enough ; now, O Lord, take away my life ; for I am not better than my fathers."

Nor was the serener spirit of Jesus without vivid realization of the sterner aspects of the laws of habit. With His own most pitying eyes He had seen God's children caught fast in this terrible mechanism of evil. He had seen the loving soul of ardent Peter struggling vainly against it. And He had found a partial solution of this saddening mystery in that old doctrine of a merciful dualism which led him to declare : "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Christ saw clearly man's supreme need of moral carefulness. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." And the pathetic words addressed by Jesus to St. Peter, with regard to the coming physical weakness of his old age, have often seemed to me a marvellously vivid portrayal of the moral powerlessness of the careless and untrained soul to free itself in its old age, by mere volition, from the tyranny of inveterate custom. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest ; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." These words might well seem to have been uttered on purpose to express the amazing difference which there is

in moral power between the buoyant soul of youth, unfettered by bad habits, and the weakened and depressed energy of the old soul, fettered on every side by "the bands of those sins which by its frailty it has committed."

The whole teaching of Christ and His apostles is in truth full of a very grave sense of the difficulty of vanquishing evil habits. At times the heart of Jesus seems almost crushed as He realizes this difficulty. At times it seemed to Him as if temperament determined everything; as if good and evil were both almost permanently unalterable. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." It is almost as if our Lord did not then quite realize the moral effects of that process of "grafting" which St. Paul expatiated upon in after years. And thus a well-nigh hopeless sorrow filled His heart, as He yearned over the wasted and irrecoverable possibilities of hardened and impenitent Jerusalem. It may be that Jesus then remembered the despairing sternness of the great teachers of His own nation, in former years, as to inveterate sinfulness. "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone." "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity—why should ye be stricken any more?"

It is also abundantly manifest that St. Paul thoroughly realized the extreme and almost hopeless

difficulty of curing inveterate evil. What is the greater part of the celebrated seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans but one long, wailing cry of hopeless moral agony—the voice of a despairing soul realizing its own abiding imprisonment? Truly St. Paul knew nothing of the Kantian view of the proud autonomy of the human will, dwelling in the remote fastnesses of an unphenomenal world, far removed from the din and discord of unsuccessful moral strife. To him, when grovelling in the dust of moral defeat and ignominy, the preaching of this far-off sovereign will would have seemed a vain, tantalizing absurdity. Concerning this otiose and inoperative will, St. Paul might have said, with bitterest irony, what was formerly said of the incapable Egyptians and their futile aid, that “its strength is to sit still.” It would indeed have been vain to invoke the aid of this non-natural sovereign, dwelling far off in his nebulous kingdom. This futile monarch was but a helpless Baal ; and if men in sore distress should cry to him for help, it would be as it was with the votaries of Baal in earlier years, when, in response to the most agonizing supplications, “There was no voice, nor any that answered.” Of such a hypothetical sovereign will, in no way manifested to us, the very best that we can say is that “peradventure it sleepeth, and must be awaked.” Meanwhile, the iron entered into the very soul of Paul. The kingdom of Satan was within

him, reaching down to the very spring or source of his motives. Long years of possession seemed to have given the flesh a sort of right to reign. "I find, then, a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

And when instructing others, St. Paul never forgot the fatal force of habitual sin, of the "bondage of corruption," as he called it. Even when engaged in combating the Jewish law — in the Epistle to the Galatians — he never forgot the great laws of Nature and of God. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Mr. Cotter Morison (see his "Service of Man") has apparently never heard of this famous Christian saying; or else I suppose he thinks that Christianity has stolen it from science, and now carries about this "new wine" in the "old bottles" of antique tradition. But this deep moral utterance was no incongruous patch on the original texture of St. Paul's teaching. In the sweat of his brow he had gained this knowledge. The fire of keenest moral anguish had burnt it into Paul's heart and mind. The antinomianism of Paul was but the antinomianism of Nature and of reason. The laws of a Judaic provincialism he scrupled not to set aside; but the laws of the universe ever thundered menacingly in his ears. Concerning himself he might well say, as regards the mysteries of the moral world, "A night and a day I have been in the deep."

I hope that I have now made it clear that our religion does not teach the doctrine of the absolute and unrestricted freedom of the will; that it thoroughly recognizes the very considerable and important element of truth which is contained in the opposite doctrine of the bondage of the will; and that really genuine Christianity is penetrated through and through with a deep and almost saddening sense of the inveteracy of moral evil, and the supreme importance of serving God in our youth, of beginning very early in life to form good and wise habits. In fact, the dark shadow of a sinfulness deemed quite incurable has age after age obscured the brightness of our Christian hope. In the earlier days of the Church, many thought that sin after baptism could not be forgiven, at least gross and wilful sin. The doctrine of eternal punishment, hideous though it is, at least bears witness to the fact that Christianity did not think lightly of moral evil. We must remember that in past ages, Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, has almost always taught that the saved would be few. I suppose that hardly any one could read Cardinal Newman's parochial sermons without being struck with their profound moral gloom. As I read them and thought of the actual feelings and lives of my fellow-men, I found myself involuntarily exclaiming, "Who then can be saved?" "It had been good 'for those men if they had never been born."

Thus unsparingly and "roughly" has former religion preached morality. But now its moral tone is grown more hopeful, though not, I trust, more careless.

In another sermon I hope to show that there is also much truth and value in the doctrine of the *freedom* of the will; that we are not in any way machines; that we are truly endowed with such a degree of moral power as to make us responsible beings, honest, often baffled, but still resolute sons of God, and not mere playthings of a crushing Necessitarianism.

Here, then, I leave our human nature, for a time, in a condition like that of Gideon's warriors, "faint, yet pursuing."

THE BONDAGE AND THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

II.

PHILIPPIANS ii., *part of verse 12, and verse 13.*

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

IN my last discourse I considered the question of the bondage or freedom of the will, and I endeavoured to show that rational Christianity does not teach that we have any absolute and unrestricted freedom, and that it thoroughly realizes the fact that our wills are hampered and hemmed in on every side by difficulties and obstacles both hereditary and acquired. I hope now to show that we have some small degree of freedom, at least enough to constitute us responsible beings, and not machines. Having inculcated humility and a sense of our own essential weakness in my last discourse, I now hope to set forth the reasons which there are for moral hopefulness and strenuous exertion. I hope to make it plain that the Spirit of God has not entirely forsaken us, that we are capable of receiving

and directing, if not of creating, genuine moral force ; that the branch at least possesses the power of abiding steadfastly in the vine ; that the "dry bones" of our withered and desiccated faculties at least retain the power of moving responsively, when "prophesied upon" by the mighty and reviving inspiration of religion ; that we may say of spontaneity, or the power of initiating changes, that in the hearts of our fellow-men "it is not dead, but sleepeth."

And so we preach no gloomy doctrine of moral despair. On the contrary, we dare to address the sinful, the apathetic, or the desponding in that bold language of inspired, though paradoxical, wisdom, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Our own realized weakness leads us to the true source of abiding strength. "Thy heart shall fear, and be enlarged." We are encouraged to "work out our own salvation," because we know that "it is God that worketh in us." Our "youth is renewed, like the eagle's." "They that wait upon the Lord renew their strength." They shall "mount up with wings, as eagles." The universe is not dead, nor yet a charnel-house of blasted and putrescent possibilities. Still, as in the ancient days, the all-quickenings Spirit of God "moves upon the face of the waters," and brings order and increasing purpose out of the formless void of blind, groping, and unmeaning instincts. Not once, on some fancied

day of creation, but repeatedly throughout the long ages of slow development, the divine wisdom murmurs to itself, "Let us make man in our own image." The sacred and awful gift of freedom, the real and God-like "dominion," could only be bestowed on man gradually, as he was able to bear it.

Not even yet does man fully realize this "unspeakable gift." From lonely Pisgah heights the pilgrim soul now and then descries the wondrous, radiant glories of the "promised land." Still journeys before us the mighty Ideal, at once interpreting and transfiguring the actual. "Henceforth"—in some far-off mysterious world—the human spirit believes that "there is laid up for it a crown of righteousness." *Not yet* does that pure crown of incorruptible and undying moral splendour gleam on the worn, scarred forehead of Nature's outcast pilgrim. Not yet for the yearning prodigal does the Eternal Father bring forth the "best robe" of an unstained holiness and an unfettered will. Not yet does the mighty and all-vitalizing will of the Most High rejoice that His wandering son "was dead, and is alive again"; was dead in the grave-yard of a stifling mechanism, and is at length alive in that sacred city of spiritual freedom, whose light is no flickering lantern of man's wavering volition, but where there burns with everlasting brightness the uncreated and quenchless fire of God's underived and awful spontaneity.

Meanwhile, on earth, in the midst of defeat, the soul may always encourage itself by rallying on its glorious possibilities. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." "The Lord sitteth above the water-floods" of Nature's wild, heterogeneous impulses ; and in that divine sovereignty we see a sure prophecy of our own future dominion. For God is our ideal and our goal. Evermore He murmurs in our rejoicing ears that old sublime, invigorating command, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Verily, as we "prisoners of hope" listen to the music of these soul-cheering words, it often seems as if "a light shined in the prison," as to Peter of old, as if "the foundations of the prison were shaken," as they were for praying Paul and Silas. We almost feel an angel of the Ideal "smiting us on the side, and raising us up." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Man's moral exhortations often only tantalize us ; but those of God inspire and invigorate us.

In order to be believed and received, above all things it is necessary that the theory of human freedom should be carefully and reasonably stated. There is a very common way of stating it which inevitably makes it seem false and absurd. *Absolute* freedom in man is incredible and even inconceivable ; and even as regards God, we can only believe, and

not in any way depict or realize, the existence of such freedom. In man, at all events, such freedom is impossible. It implies motiveless volition, creation out of nothing, the motiveless creation of our own motives. Truly we cannot thus make bricks without straw. As well might the eagle think to soar without the atmosphere, which perhaps seems to resist or restrain him. That which seems an impediment or restraint is, in our present state, an indispensable condition of activity. To get rid of all our desires would not be for man the apotheosis, but the annihilation, of morality. We must accept the inconveniences and inherent contradictions of a state of transition. Our wills are only being gradually fashioned here on earth. As St. Paul says, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." Our highest life is "sown" in the "weakness" of half-animal impulses; it is gradually "raised" in the "power" of conscious choice and spiritual freedom. And thus our present struggling vacillation has a really hopeful significance. It is as the earlier efforts of a child learning to walk. Sin, in some aspects, appears but as a dark tunnel leading from the light of Nature to the more glorious light of reason and spirit. Even now our eyes are at least opened to discern the nakedness of our own condition. And this is a gain, even though we should for a time array ourselves in

the poor fig-leaves of a premature philosophy and an imaginary freedom.

Absolute freedom is for us both impossible and inconceivable. That we can, under ordinary circumstances, act as we like, is true enough ; but we cannot *like as we like*. We do not choose our own temperaments and tastes. These we must be content to inherit. Our will is not a sovereign despot reigning serenely in empty space, but a president of a highly tumultuous and contentious republic. Our uneducated and undisciplined desires often murmur against reason as against some pretentious Moses, who has led them from the old plenteousness of the instinctive life into the barren wilderness of unending moral strife. The human will is not like Jehovah. It cannot inscribe its authoritative commands on a "tabula rasa" furnished by Nature. Even the most carefully cultivated human character is but as a moral palimpsest, in which the old impressions of natural and ancestral desires are distinctly traceable beneath the later edicts of the spiritual reason. The will cannot thrust out our animal nature with a fork. A larger knowledge cannot cancel inherited tendencies. The serpent lied, when it said so confidently that Adam and Eve should at once "be as Gods," because "knowing good and evil." On the contrary the experience of our race teaches us that knowledge often brings "not peace, but a sword," that "in much wisdom is much grief."

Thoughtless preachers of free will often do very great harm by their foolish and unreal teaching. In the first place, they often render truth itself incredible and ridiculous. They know not how much more, in this case, is the solid half than the imaginary whole, a cottage on *terra firma* than a castle in the far-off clouds. These foolish preachers affront science in a most unnecessary way. They entirely ignore proved and widely dominant laws of biology; they practically deny the supreme importance of the laws of habit. Theirs is the wisdom of the ostrich; they bury their heads in the sands of the casual and the miraculous, and think that they have escaped from the ordinary working of Nature's abiding laws. But the terrors of Nature will not be so evaded. We must obey her before we venture to transcend her. A soul fed on anomalies is an abortion. The human will is often lulled into a false security, instead of being braced by daily conflict with realized difficulties. The belief that a mere act of volition can cancel the accumulated evils of a vicious life, is most injurious. Nature's wild, resurgent, and tempestuous instincts often make short work of moral edifices thus built on sands.

Moreover, there is something essentially unreal and hollow in the discourses of those who preach absolute free will. Consciousness, when interrogated and summoned to confirm such exaggerated teaching,

is obstinately silent. "There is no voice, nor any that answers." Hence the appeal to consciousness is often discredited, even when made by the wise and thoughtful. The mighty and eloquent soul is supposed to be dumb, merely because it refuses to assist at the childish, thaumaturgic exhibitions of those who flout Nature. The soul is sometimes reckoned powerless, because it wisely refuses to attempt to emulate the feats of Samson—refuses to attempt to carry away the gates of Nature's guarded orderliness, or to pull down the vast edifice of habit and ancestral tendencies, and so bring on the abiding desolation alike of itself and of its dwelling-place. Such a consummation would be eminently undesirable. Deep spirits, like that of St. Paul, may often "groan in this tabernacle" of inherited ancestral qualities, "being burdened"; but they are content to wait for a nobler spiritual edifice hereafter—"a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Meanwhile, they have no desire to be "unclothed and naked"—to become a mere naked mass of vague and indeterminate potentialities. It is "more life and fuller than we want"; and this, in our present state, implies an organism with well-marked propensities inherited from the past.

In this age, I think that the "foolishness of preaching" is nowhere more clearly exhibited than in the moral exhortations of those religionists who preach

the entire freedom of the will, and almost completely ignore our human incapacity and weakness. In the vast majority of sermons that we hear there is a large element of the make-believe. And this is the real reason why men yawn so much in church, and listen so very little. The ordinary moral teaching of our churches often seems totally irrelevant to our condition, our capacities, and our wants. It might do admirably for some other world, and for creatures of some totally different sort. When we hear such teaching, our thoughts are naturally rebellious against it. It is pervaded by a latent and very unkind irony. It seems fairly liable to St. James's censure of unreal benevolence ; " If a brother or a sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled ; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit ? " Most ordinary sermons imply that we made ourselves, and are responsible for our original temperaments ; and we know well that this is radically untrue.

These tantalizing discourses also usually imply that we possess the power of suddenly, by mere volition, changing our natures, of blotting out the stains of inherited and acquired evil ; and this also we know by experience to be false. Consequently, sermons do not generally seem to have any real reference to our actual life and its very limited possibilities. To tell

us that the badness of our original dispositions is our own fault, appears as preposterous as it would be to tell us that it is our own fault that we are too short or too tall. The advice that we should at once become angels seems as useless as would be the advice that we should at once become as experienced as Methuselah, or as musical as nightingales. Such exhortations are highly exasperating as well as futile.

Such unthinking moral teaching does real harm in this way, viz., that it makes men conclude that they may as well do nothing, because they cannot do as they are advised to do. It is plain enough that we cannot change the moral bricks originally given us. We cannot get rid of our temperament, any more than we can get rid of our personality and become some other person. No training could have made King Charles II. into a Fenelon or a Leighton, though he might certainly have been less bad than he was. It is far more salutary to preach a real, though limited, sort of freedom, to urge men to make the best use of the material originally given them; and thus to find an echo in their hearts, "By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Let us turn now to the arguments of those philosophers and men of science who deny to us any degree of real moral freedom. They say that the will is necessarily determined by the strongest motive,

and that we cannot select for ourselves the motives that influence us; they are given us by our inherited temperament, and by circumstances. These teachers would usually deny that the will is a distinct faculty at all, or even that it is a distinct phase or mode of operation of reason. In their judgment it is merely a result or summing up, much as the striking of a clock is the result of its internal mechanism. Thus the theory of a distinct faculty, or a specialized form of reason, called the will, is a curious relic of an almost vanished way of thinking. It is much on a par with the old Animism, which ascribed the activity of inanimate objects to spirits dwelling in them. It is almost as foolish as the conduct of a child in punishing its doll for misbehaviour, or in feeling resentment against the chairs and tables that fall upon it.

And there remains another grave objection on the part of these scientific men to the doctrine of free will, viz., that it breaks the vast chain of causes and effects; that it rends the fair garment of Nature's unity—that "coat which is without seam, woven from the top throughout." Thus free will, unlike God, is the "author of confusion." It is the enemy of system; and system is as dear to science as was Diana to the Ephesians. By the anarchical preaching of free will, men of science vehemently declare that "this our craft is in danger to be set at nought."

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The preachers of free will "trouble" the well-ordered "Israel" of established science, much as the wild and erratic utterances of the prophets once troubled the conventional morality of the ancient Jewish authorities. Scientific men very naturally wish to get rid of this inexplicable and baffling element in moral science, viz., freedom. It is an irreducible surd, or a kind of Jonah in the stately ship of science; and it ought to be cast overboard. Perhaps the tough digestion of illogical whales might be able, in some degree, to assimilate it.

But, if we steadily contemplate *all* the facts at our disposal, I think we shall find that science itself is eminently unscientific in thus proposing to suppress or deny awkward and incoherent truths. After all, we have no right to expect a perfect and final system in this life. The root of the central mysteries of the universe will remain, and grow in the back-gardens of our civilized suburban villas, though we may have endeavoured a hundred times to pluck it up. It is for ever impossible adequately to explain the higher in terms of the lower.

If Darwinism be true, a difficulty very similar to our present one, must have occurred at a much earlier stage of development, viz., when the old instinctive life was being invaded by the rational and moral life. Great must then have been the bewilderment and indignation of the more ancient priests of

science, the priests of the hoarded wisdom of instinct, gathered by half-conscious induction through many thousands of years. The hierophants of instinct may then well have protested and exclaimed, "This our craft is in danger to be set at nought." Great must then have been the temptation to set aside the dawning light of reason and morality as a mere *ignis fatuus*, or to explain it as being nothing but an exaggerated and fantastic shadow of the old life. Reason with its obstinate questioning of outward things, and morality with its upturned face of vague yearning, must both have then seemed anarchical intruders, profanely seeking to abolish the worship of the great goddess, custom, or system, consecrated by the homage of so many generations. Prematurely systematized knowledge is often the enemy of truth. New truths often have to lodge in lowly mangers, because there is "no room" for them in the well-furnished inns, or the symmetrical temples, of established science. The deliverer often waxes fat, and becomes a despot. The crowbars once used by science to force open the prisons of slumbering ignorance, are now turned into weapons of offence, to keep off the aggressive forces of newer truths. The thirst for dominion is common to all men, and so is the wish to "magnify their office." "New presbyter is but old priest writ large."

In the dispute between Necessitarianism and the

doctrine of a real, though limited, freedom of the will, the final appeal must inevitably be made to our human consciousness. If consciousness be deemed fallacious, there can be no kind of certainty for man. The kingdom of reason is "within us." Science itself is utterly impossible without certain postulates derived from philosophy ; and philosophy is, or professes to be, an explication of the inner truths of consciousness. The world of sense, taken alone, would be a mere formless chaos, a valley of dry bones waiting for the prophet to call them into life. The world of sense is for ever calling unto reason to "come over and help" it. If science contradicts consciousness, so much the worse for science. We know ourselves more immediately, and more intimately, than we can know the external world. No building can be really firmer than its basis.

Let us, then, listen reverently to the great prophet within us. And, of course, we must take the utmost pains not to misinterpret the utterances of the oracle within us. And this oracle is very often misinterpreted, and especially with reference to this question of freedom. Consciousness is very often supposed to teach mere casualism ; to "make void the law" in favour of caprice ; to declare that our actions are wholly exempt from the sway of law, and that they occur in no coherent and orderly manner. This is not to defend or explain our moral life, but rather to

render it unmeaning. If our actions are not the result of our character, they cannot express it, and are therefore meaningless and destitute of all value. The goal of the human race is not unmeaning chaos, or moral libertinism and anarchy, but reason's glorious self-control, as it gazes upwards with reverential homage to the sublime laws of the universe, and recognizes its own essential affinity with them. God's "service" is the only "perfect freedom." To obey gladly, because we recognize the essential reasonableness of the claims made upon us, that is the freedom of the wise. When deep calleth unto deep, when the subordinate and, as it were, diluted reason in man answers gladly to the sovereign, concentrated, and fontal reason of God, and eagerly offers the homage of a son, and not of a slave, then is the true harmony established. To be wholly free from law would be to us a sentence of exile from the dear home of the Eternal Father. We should then become outcast abortions, or a mere blot on the glory of His fair universe. To obey the divine laws with conscious alacrity is not slavery, because, in some very real sense, it is to obey *our own* self-imposed laws. Reason in us is essentially the same as reason in the universe. The Ideal is to us no task-master, but a friend that is as our own soul. It is our own nobler self, which has already risen from the grave of corruption. God is essentially the Father of our spirits, and therefore His laws are, in some

sense, our laws. Even the "ministration of condemnation" has a certain "glory" of its own. It is as the blast of reason's trumpet gathering the forces of the soul to war; it is a suggestive innuendo, the fiery utterance of a stern but hopeful prophet. No Elijah "troubles" the stagnant repose of the lower animals, We would not forfeit our glorious heritage of unending development. We are "heirs of God," and therefore our interests and His are one. And so we would fain serve Him with conscious and exultant subjection. We would not stray in the arid wilderness of caprice, or be as the senseless cattle that wander vaguely and without purpose over Nature's thousand hills.

But this explanation is, to some extent, a digression. Let us return to our simple interrogation of consciousness; and so far as may be, let us look at the question for the moment with non-religious eyes. What is the ordinary testimony of consciousness as regards freedom, to the natural man uninfluenced by religion, and equally uninfluenced by the scientific lust after system? I think that the truth is that we are conscious of being able in some measure to *direct* force, but not to originate it. The lines on which each human spirit must travel are laid by its inherited qualities, and the locomotive power is also chiefly given us; but our will is in some ways like a pointsman on a railway, able to select to some extent on which of several possible lines the train shall travel. Within

certain very narrow limits, I think that consciousness does testify to our freedom. Our original temperament does indeed say to the rising waves of fresh impulses coming to us from external Nature, or from the hearts of our fellow-men, "Hitherto shall ye come, but no further." Still, it permits us to some extent to pick and choose amongst these fresh waves of thought and feeling. And herein is the germ of real freedom. The doctrine of certain philosophers, that the will necessarily follows the strongest motive, is either tautological, or else a mere begging of the question. It either means merely that the prevailing motive prevails; or else it implicitly denies that we have any power of modifying the force of motives. And this latter teaching is false. Motives do not act upon us "ab extra," and with unvarying power. We ourselves to a considerable extent make the motives, by taking them up into our hearts, and pondering over them, and inwardly digesting them.

Moreover, Necessitarian teachers to a great extent ignore one prominent feature of our moral life, viz., the struggling against impulse, the painful and prolonged efforts to resist, of which we are genuinely conscious. If we were machines, we should assuredly be very strangely constructed machines. We could not say of any piece of mechanism what we may truly say of our own inner being, that it is a "house divided against itself." We are perfectly conscious

of anti-impulsive efforts in our own souls. When our impulses by their collective weight threaten, as it were, to overturn the ship in one direction, we are often perfectly conscious of throwing the weight of our will in the other direction. There is a manifest dualism in man, which there is not in anything merely mechanical. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," so that we "cannot do the things that we would." It often seems as if we had *two* wills. The basis of our nature is composed of a semi-mechanical animality ; but on this is erected a moral and spiritual edifice. God first "formed man of the dust of the ground," and then gradually "breathes into his nostrils the breath of life," so that "man becomes a living soul. That which Necessitarians affirm is true enough of our old will, but not of our newer and higher will. Our present will is not entirely of animal descent; it is not merely a highly complex form of the old animal desires. It is not merely defecated lust, a more refined form of sensual craving. It has been, as it were, "born again," or "born from above." Our present will is very often in direct and conscious antagonism with all our lower desires and impulses. Our will often "scorns *delight*, and lives laborious days." The higher life is not always a pleasurable life in any sense. Pigs are probably far more uniformly happy than thoughtful men. Hence, if we are in no sense to be permitted

to wear the crown of an incipient freedom, thorny though that crown may be, if our life is to be essentially as much a life of bondage as that of the beasts, one does not see why the element of discord and struggling effort was introduced into our existence at all. At that rate, we are but abortions of Nature, ambitious failures, worms haunted by divine dreams impossible of fulfilment. One solid argument against Necessitarianism is, that it renders the most distinctive and characteristic part of our nature altogether unmeaning.

Whilst it is quite true that we cannot ourselves manufacture entirely new motives, any more than we can create new senses, yet I believe that we can gradually alter our characters to some extent; can choose our own masters out of the rival claimants sent us by Nature; can attach ourselves to some motives, and comparatively neglect others. And this power grows greater by being exercised. Certainly we possess some real power of directing our attention to some subjects, and of diverting it from others. And so, even though two motives may, to all appearance, be objectively equal—like the two equally attractive bundles of hay which perplexed the ass—yet, by resolutely giving more thought to the one than to the other, we can in time assign more influence over us to the one than to the other. We must serve some master. Motiveless volition is

impossible; and the raw materials of our motives are born in us, or wafted to us, and not made by us. Still, we can turn ourselves more towards one set of motives than towards another set. And then the law of habit will work in favour of freedom. In deliberately chosen "service" we shall find at least approximate freedom. One set of motives will be our shield against another set. Without this germinal and very limited freedom of selection, one scarcely sees how increasing spiritual differentiation and moral progress have been possible at all. The "cohesion of psychical states, proportionate to the frequency with which they have followed one another in experience," would have erected an insuperable barrier to progress, a reign of mere monotony, unless there had been in man some slight power of sallying forth, as it were, from the prisons of habit, to welcome the delivering angels of fresh tendencies coming to us from Nature's inexhaustible and variegated wealth. Our dead ancestors would have ruled us with a rod of iron. We really nourish and develop our souls, not only by passiveness, but by a wise and selecting passiveness. Though planted in the earth of ancestral tendencies, the soul is able to turn itself towards the sun of dawning righteousness and truth. And thus we transcend our ancestors. We say to one stream of tendency, "Get thee behind me, Satan"; and we say to another, "Lead, kindly Light."

And here, I think, legitimately comes in religion. Nature herself leads us into the spiritual world, as John the Baptist led men to Christ. Baffled and perplexed morality lifts up its tear-stained eyes to the eternal hills of divine far-off realities, "whence cometh our help." When mechanism threatens to pursue, overtake, and devour it as a runaway servant, morality can still cheer itself with those consolatory words, "I know that my redeemer liveth." The failure of the actual is the opportunity of the great Ideal. Not vainly do we dream of freedom. It is among those nobler "things which God hath prepared for us." The dream is a true prophecy, like that of plants in mines dreaming of the sun. Religion is the true home of man's mocked and disappointed aspirations. Nature deposits her incurably bruised children at the "beautiful gate" of the Infinite Mystery. The actual cannot exhaust the divine potentialities of the universe. The Ideal, though often buried despondently by sorrowing disciples, ever rises again to larger life and grander triumphs. "It is not possible that it should be holden of death"; for it is the very meaning of the universe. It is "the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty." The realms of the undying Ideal are an unfailing "city of refuge" to Nature's weary children, the outcasts of the actual. There are gathered together deep pilgrim spirits driven

out of the actual, and going forth in perplexed ignorance, like Abraham of old, "not knowing whither they go."

Emerson saw clearly that religion, or the realization of the spiritual world, is our best and only adequate deliverer from the nightmare of Necessitarianism. Philosophy leaves us in a bewildering fog of hopeless contradictions, which the dawning light of religion alone can disperse. Emerson says, "On its own level, or in view of nature, temperament is final. I see not, if one once be caught in this trap of so-called sciences, any escape for the man from the links of the chain of physical necessity. Given such an embryo, such a history must follow. On this platform, one lives in a sty of sensualism, and would soon come to suicide. But it is impossible that the creative power should exclude itself. Into every intelligence there is a door which is never closed, through which the Creator passes. The intellect, seeker of absolute truth, or the heart, lover of absolute good, intervenes for our succour; and at one whisper of these high powers, we awake from ineffectual struggles with this nightmare. We hurl it into its own hell, and cannot again contract ourselves to so base a state." (See Emerson's essay on "Experience.")

I think that this writer is also wise in teaching that our very imperfect psychology has no right to

dogmatize about the final possibilities of the soul, and exclude new forms of spiritual life because they are not reconcilable with past experience. The soul is essentially a pilgrim. Emerson's words are, "For this reason, the argument that is always forthcoming to silence those who conceive extraordinary hopes of man, namely, the appeal to experience, is for ever invalid and vain. We give up the past to the objector, and yet we hope. He must explain this hope." And again, "Why do men feel that the natural history of man has never been written, but he is always leaving behind what you have said of him, and it becomes old, and books of metaphysics worthless? The philosophy of six thousand years has not searched the chambers and magazines of the soul. In its experiments there has always remained, in the last analysis, a residuum it could not solve. Man is a stream whose source is hidden. Our being is descending into us from we know not whence. The most exact calculator has no prescience that somewhat incalculable may not balk the very next moment. I am constrained every moment to acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine." (See the "Over-soul.") In fact, we see no reason to permit our present imperfect and contradictory logic to turn itself into a hostile angel brandishing a flaming sword to keep us away from the "tree of life." The germs of our highest life are wafted to us from unseen

worlds ; and we perceive no reason for rejecting these priceless germs merely because we know not whence they come, because science cannot analyze them.

But, at the same time, we do not admit that we thrust science aside, or neglect its reasonable instruction. Our attitude towards science in its present state is, in some ways, much like that of St. Paul towards "the law." We see its value ; but we also see its imperfections. Neither the old Judaic law nor the dogmatism of our present science has any real right or power to determine the course of nascent spiritual life. The "new wine" of the spirit must be put into "new bottles," even though science should refuse to label them, or should even brand them as inventions of quackery. We do not really "make void the law" through faith in man's spiritual element ; we only seek to go a little beyond it. Mr. Cotter Morison, in his "Service of Man," declares that, "It is evident that the doctrine of the freedom of the will supposes the phenomena of the mind to be exempt from the laws and conditions which regulate the rest of nature." This is not true as regards the more reasonable forms of the doctrine of free will. We do not claim that the soul is *entirely* exempt from the influence of physical laws. What we say is this, that spiritual life *modifies*, without cancelling, the operation of physical laws, much as

vital force modifies the action of chemical laws. We do not cast aside the science of medicine as worthless because we affirm that the action of medicines on the human body is highly variable, the idiosyncrasies of each individual, and the changing conditions of the same individual, regulating to a great extent the operation of drugs. Certainly, we ought not to forget that, in its ordinary working, the moral or spiritual element in man is largely dependent upon the physical. We must obey the laws of Nature before we venture in any degree to transcend them. To know the laws which determine the welfare of our present "tabernacle" of the flesh tends greatly to lessen our groaning under its burden. Religion owes very much to the wise and thoughtful teaching of reasonable physiologists, such as the late Dr. Carpenter. Our belief in a strictly limited freedom of the will is in no way inconsistent with belief in the immense advantages of careful moral culture. And we would fain know all that we can about the "earthen vessels" which now hold the "treasure" of spiritual life. We would fain keep them free from all dirt and filth which make them less suitable for their high office.

In fact, the doctrine of the very limited freedom of the will, in which alone I believe, tends to produce in us a sense of dependence, rather than a sense of self-sufficiency. Nature rules us despotically until we

recognize her drift, and tendencies; and then she becomes our wise and austere friend. Spiritual deeps cry responsively to natural deeps. Reason in us takes hold of reason in nature. We often nourish our souls far best by a wise passiveness. The baffled, wounded, and sin-stained soul loves to plunge itself into the healing waters of the "streams of tendency which make for righteousness." Our own frantic moral struggling often seems only to rivet our chains the more firmly, or to drive the poisoned arrow further into us. We exult greatly in being for a time delivered from the burden of painful and solitary efforts. The divine reason, diffused throughout Nature, often utters to us that wise old warning, "Be still, and know that I am God." The divine largeness of Nature often seems a veritable refuge from our individual pettiness. Her sublime calm soothes our exasperated restlessness. Her grandeur is a better rebuke to our narrow selfishness than any amount of human preaching. We often delight to abandon ourselves with resolute volition to the healing and cleansing agencies of Nature. We deliberately place ourselves in the way of her pure and vitalizing breezes, as the blind men threw themselves in the way of Jesus. Herein is a kind of freedom. We are not able to cure our own infirmities; but we are able to fling ourselves in the way of the loftiest spiritual influences passing by us.

Our freedom largely depends on our fellow-men for its development. The solitary man is, for the most part, a mere mass of dormant potentialities and unavailable electric forces. To release these suppressed forces, or to develop them, contact with other minds is necessary. "He that keepeth his life shall lose it," is a wise saying pregnant with deepest moral significance. The rust and moth corrupt spiritual treasures hidden away in our private cellars. In the deepest sense of the word, we cannot "save" ourselves; others must in great measure do that for us. Only by being invaded can our land become free. Neither monotony, nor the vague caprice of conflicting and unreasoning desires, is real freedom. Only by being universalized can our individual nature be rationalized, and redeemed from unmeaning slavery. It is only when Christ, or universal humanity, lives in us, that we truly live. Only thus can our dormant and incipient faculties be "touched to fine issues." The ascetic dream of moral liberty is a delusion; its freedom is but the freedom of a caged animal; its peace is but wearisome monotony. We must at least touch the hem of the garments of natures higher than our own; and then virtue will stream out of them into us. God forbid that we should seek to retain the abject poverty of our meagre, individualistic freedom. We must die, in order to live. Sometimes angels come and "smite us on the side," and break our chains;

and we resent their interference, and hug our fancied freedom. The new motives for a higher life must generally come to us from others. We must be grafted into the larger life of our race, grafted into Christ. "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Love, or far-ranging sympathy, is the best fulfilling of the law. Not by striving to cut off our obstinate lower members, but by incorporating them into a larger whole, shall we best emancipate ourselves from their unduly clamorous demands.

Lastly, I think that this doctrine of a real, but very limited, freedom of the will is full of encouragement and moral hopefulness. It teaches us at once compassion and high aspiration for humanity. The recognition of the manifold impediments and restrictions now imposed upon man's will, the recognition that the creature is now "made subject unto vanity," begets in us deep pity for those who are wandering and out of the way; and the recognition of some real, though germinal, freedom in man saves us from despairing about human nature. This reasonable doctrine finds a genuine echo in the ordinary heart of humanity, which is not accorded either to the tantalizing preaching of absolute freedom, or to the chilling and repulsive teaching of scientific Necessitarianism. The appeal to results is a powerful appeal. "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the

people answered and said, It is well spoken." The real "fire" of the moral world, which can alone burn up the chaff of evil habits, is with the prophets of a reasonable freedom, and with them alone. The foolish preachers of absolute freedom follow an *ignis fatuus*, and the scientific Necessitarians offer men only the withered ashes of the extinct fires of vanished spontaneity.

Even when the soul seems sunk in evil or in the abiding torpor of paralysis, we dare to hope; for we know its mighty inborn potentialities. We know that the Ideal is the true goal of the whole universe. God is the abiding reality; and He hath sown in every human heart the germs of freedom and holiness. These germs may often lie latent for ages; but we believe that they are not destroyed. And it often happens that noble aspirations linger on in the hearts of the sinful to a far greater extent than we suppose. The mighty, deathless soul of goodness sometimes looks out upon us through deep human eyes of the erring and the wandering, and prophesies of splendid victories to be hereafter. We often mistake in sinners the apathy of despair for acquiescence in evil. The caged eagle of the spiritual world, grown old in captivity, often *seems* content, merely because hope too long deferred has made its heart grow sick. But it is not content. The glorious mountains of its ancient freedom are as dear to it as ever. It may have

ceased to struggle ; but it can never cease to regret. Its dreams, at least, are free and "nearer to God." And in those glorious dreams, so full of an infinite sadness, is mingled an undying hope. In dreams God often vouchsafes to His vanquished elect a splendid vision of their far-off home. To weeping spirits He then often discloses the pure moral effulgence of an unstained and incorruptible freedom. And the imprisoned heart of yearning aspiration soothes the aching of its present unrest, and almost "leads its captivity captive," by glancing onwards to the shining goal, and meekly murmuring to itself those grand, old, hopeful words, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

This deep, abiding moral hopefulness is admirably expressed by a modern poet, whose words I gladly borrow. She writes thus :

"Have we not all, amid life's petty strife,
Some pure ideal of a nobler life
That once seemed possible ?
Did we not hear
The flutter of its wings, and feel it near,
And just within our reach ? It was, and yet
We lost it in this daily jar and fret,
And now live idle in a vague regret ;
But still our place is kept, and it will wait,
Ready for us to fill it soon or late :
No star is ever lost we once have seen ;
We always may be what we might have been,
Since good, though only thought, has life and breath,
God's life,—can always be redeemed from death ;

And evil in its nature is decay,
And any hour can blot it all away.
The hopes that lost in some far distance seem
May be the truer life, and this the dream."

In the sweet music of these noble words one seems to hear the sound of divine songs in the dark night of spiritual despair. Amidst the infinite grief of shattered hopes, abandoned freedom, and blasted aspirations, the baffled soul seems to hear an angel voice, saying unto it, "Turn to the stronghold, thou prisoner of hope." The captive eagle hears of a mighty deliverer, who "hath broken the gates of brass, and smitten the bars of iron in sunder." The soul turns itself passionately once more to the gleaming form of the undying Ideal, and prays to it thus with eager fervour: "O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldest Thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? Yet Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy Name; leave us not." We beseech the Ideal to "abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And from afar we seem to hear the old blessed assurance of its unceasing love, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

We believe that the sacred power which "so long

hath blessed us" will "still lead us on," till "the day breaks, and the shadows flee away"; till the grander dreams of life shall be proved at length to have been its only realities, till the now baffled soul shall at last pour forth glad songs of triumphant joy, and exclaim, like ransomed captives in the days of old: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, then were we like unto them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with joy. Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them."

Meanwhile, on earth, let us hold fast our faith in the final victory of the Ideal. Let us not permit the actual to sadden us too much. Though we may at present be "wanderers," in "darkness," and "resting on a stone," let us still cry unto God to haunt our dreams with the blessed visions of far-off perfection:—

"Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."

And, bondsmen though we may now be, let us ever cry to the Eternal reason: "Turn our captivity, O Lord, as the rivers in the south." And then our consolation will not be far off. The divine pity of God will soothe our unrest by its sweet assurance: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth

good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him." Amidst the manifold failures of our moral and spiritual life, we have one abiding source of consolation and strength. Day by day we are drawing nearer to our goal. A divine freedom is preparing to "lead our captivity captive." We are daily nearer to that glad hour, when the "prisoners of hope" shall stand erect in the glorious light of God's immediate presence ; when the pilgrim soul, which was once a bondsman in Egypt, shall be filled with the Spirit of God, and know, by profoundest personal experience, the full meaning of those ancient words, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

VICARIOUS SUFFERING.

ISAIAH liii., *verses* 3, 4, 5.

"He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : and we hid, as it were, our faces from him ; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed."

THE celebrated 53rd chapter of Isaiah has been supposed by many to refer to the Jewish nation as a whole, and not to Christ or any other individual. And, in truth, it is in many ways singularly applicable to Israel as a nation. *As a nation* Israel was "despised and rejected," and "bore the sins of many." This people was the chief medium through which the Eternal was made manifest on earth. Hence came the peculiarities and deficiencies of the Hebrew nature. The Jews were haunted by the Infinite and Eternal ; and therefore they knew not the free and careless joyousness of Greece. The mountains are scarred and rent by storms and tempests almost unknown in

the valleys. The deepest religion necessarily involves prolonged suffering. The near presence of the Infinite pierces and wounds the soul. To Greeks or Romans Israel was a sort of Moses, veiling even while revealing the terrific lineaments of Jehovah. The face of Israel did indeed shine with an unearthly glory after communing with God on the mountain ; but it was a glory utterly uncongenial to the gaiety of joyous Athens. Most truly might Greeks and Romans say of the devout Jew, "He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him ; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Yet was Israel a mighty benefactor to the human race. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Salvation came by the Jews. They had more genuine moral inspiration than any others of the sons of men. To them alone was clearly disclosed the true Jacob's ladder connecting earth with heaven. To the Greeks the Infinite was a mere notion, a thing for the intellect to play with, or a kind of irreducible surd left after the keenest philosophical analysis. To the Hebrews, on the other hand, the Infinite was an appalling and soul-abasing reality, an ever-menacing guide, as the fiery flaming sword of the cherubims "which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." "It pleased the Lord to bruise" Israel for the sake of the whole world. By being "numbered

with the transgressors," Israel found out the real righteousness. A deep and peculiar sense of sin led to the very keenest hunger and thirst after righteousness. Through the "valley of the shadow of death," by a humiliating sense of moral weakness and failure, the Jews were led on to the serene sweetness of the land of Beulah, to those untroubled realms of profoundest holiness, of which the Greeks knew little or nothing. The "city of God" was to Greeks and Romans only a far-off city in the clouds, having no real relation to man's life on earth. Only to the purged eyes of sorrowing and baffled Israel had been disclosed in its glorious beauty "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven, from God." "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

And, after all, conduct is of more importance than speculation; moral and spiritual treasures are of more abiding value than those of art or of intellect. The God-haunted recesses of man's spirit are of more real significance than the serene temples of the pure intellect. Jacob wrestling with the angel, through the long, sad night of bewilderment and doubt, does more for the welfare of the human race than the noblest of Greek sculptors fashioning the fairest works of beauty. The Sublime is the highest thing for man, though it often seems the foe of happiness, ever wearing its old eternal crown of thorns, ever

wrapped in the thick mountain mists of impenetrable gloom and darkness. The Psalms of David, though he, too, was "numbered with the transgressors," have moved man's heart and soul infinitely more than all the subtle dialogues of Plato. Through self-contempt must man pass to genuine self-knowledge, and a higher form of life. In Judaism the human spirit learnt this painful lesson of self-contempt, to the great benefit of the world at large. The Greeks almost scorned humility; but Israel knew that it is the only way to real nobleness and elevation. The Greeks only saw faint glimmerings of God in external nature. Israel had been down into hell, and found God "there also." Amidst the untold sorrows of ruined souls Israel had descried the serene lineaments of that Everlasting Pity, for which men seek vainly in the low world of commonplace happiness. Therefore, Judaism could rejoice even in its own infirmities, since by means of these the eternal goodness was more clearly revealed. One great part of Israel's mission was to show to the world the strength of weakness, the abiding power of a wise passiveness. Through Judaism the "peace of God which passeth all understanding" cries for ever to the exasperated restlessness of man's wearying and baffled efforts, "Be still, and know that I am God." Rightly understood, the grandest form of Judaism was a prophet of vicarious suffering, an apocalypse of the inexhaustible

resources of sympathy, a rebuker of the proud unwisdom of self-sufficing asceticism, a herald and a harbinger of that divine religion of humanity, which has for ever found a most expressive utterance in the noble words of sorrowing Paul, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

The Jewish nation was a type of Christ, and of all natures at once spiritual and sympathetic throughout the ages. All real prophets in every age have in them much of the true Hebrew nature, with its depths and its limitations. "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness" is the reformer's best description of himself in every nation. Many of the peculiarities of Elijah were reproduced in Carlyle. To merely artistic perceptions in every age the true prophet "has no form nor comeliness." He is ever rugged as the scarred mountains in which his soul dwells. The prophetic element almost banishes the æsthetic. Originality, with its fire, calcines cleverness and neatness. The Sublime swallows up all other kinds of beauty, as the rod of Aaron swallowed up the rods of the magicians. And thus, by the limitations and infirmities, as well as by the doubts and struggles, of great souls the world of ordinary men is redeemed. Splendid anomalies or magnificent abortions greatly enrich the human race collectively. Even poisons are often turned into tonics. Sin is often a revelation.

Great is the power of vicarious suffering in its endless varieties. By the struggles and the obstinate questionings of deep souls the world of ordinary men is redeemed and elevated. By their stripes we are healed. By their descent into hell we are raised to heaven. By their forlorn cries "de profundis" some real meaning is put into our "Te Deums" and our "Magnificats." It is by His suffering prophets that God most truly saves the world. By the untold miseries of Job, by the deep grief of Isaiah, by the piercing sorrows of Paul, by the weary restlessness of Augustine, by the fiery agonies of Luther, by the sore trials of John Bunyan, by the spiritual travail of Wesley and Whitfield, by the brave endurance of Theodore Parker, by the torn heart of Robertson of Brighton, by the manifold disquietudes and internal gloom of the great army of bewildered doubters and baffled pioneers—by all these we have been led from the house of bondage and the city of destruction, from the valley of the shadow of death, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Truly "one soweth, and another reapeth." The doubter sows in tears, and in after years the believer reaps in joy.

The work accomplished by the sufferings at Gethsemane and Calvary was a sort of condensation of the many redemptive agencies ever at work for the salvation of the world. Christ did on a vast scale what Christ-like souls are ever doing on a smaller

scale. By their "agony and bloody sweat," it is given to sympathetic souls in every age to deliver the world to some extent. Thus by the stripes of Luther John Bunyan was healed. From Luther's commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians Bunyan received peace and victory. Vicarious suffering, with its far-reaching influence, pervades the whole world. Assuredly this is not due to any after-thought of God. It is an essential part of the original arrangement. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself"; "Woe unto him that is alone." These Christian verities are in reality "writ large" over the whole variegated realm of Nature. Though Nature knows not "the Law," we may yet find in her occasional fore-gleams of the "Gospel," as it were, faint, far-off rehearsals of the sweetest music of the spiritual world. No man is really self-sufficing. As Aristotle taught, man is by nature more social than any ant or bee. Hence it is plain that we were not intended to save our souls by our own solitary efforts. The English Deists certainly erred in rejecting the true inner meaning of the doctrine of salvation by vicarious suffering. Such salvation is a simple fact given us by observation. Every day we may see the sorrows of one soul made available for the redemption of another. To deny this is as absurd as it would be to deny the effects of grafting one tree into another. The Deists did not realize

the truth that society is an organism. And our perception of this fact in the present day enables us to appreciate the real meaning of the doctrine of vicarious suffering. This truth shines all the more clearly, owing to the light of modern science, which has discredited the old Deism even more effectually than Bishop Butler did.

It has been said by some that the righteousness of one being can no more save the soul of another, than the food and the sleep of one man can nourish and refresh the body of another. Now, of course this would be true enough, if righteousness did not ever stream forth from one soul into another, if virtue did not ever go forth from one spirit and heal the infirmities of another. But we know well how marvellously hearts and souls are influenced and moulded by others. The life of the spirit is sometimes saved, even when death seems imminent, by the transfusion of the blood of a healthy spirit into the emaciated form of a decaying spirit. Even dead souls are sometimes raised up again to life. The dry, withered bones become once more instinct with life. It is often given to one soul to regenerate another and reconstruct its inner nature. The powers of sympathy, like those of electricity, are of incalculable scope and value. The personality of one man often invades and dominates that of another.

In the spiritual world there is assuredly some force

akin to that of mesmerism in the natural world. Some souls certainly magnetize others, and penetrate them down to the very sources or roots of their motives, so that they are no longer "their own, but bought with a price," the "price" being a profound and passionate sympathy. It seems as if energy were never really lost or dissipated in the spiritual world any more than in the natural world. It only changes its form. That force or energy, which existed in one soul in the form of delight in holiness, is often transformed into deep sorrow for sin in another soul. Virtue, in going out of one spirit into another, is not lost, but only changes its form; it still remains virtue, though it has put on a new appearance. The noble fidelity of one heart passes into another heart in the form of an infinite shame for falseness and cowardice. When Jesus pierced the heart of Peter with that strange look of fathomless pity and unalterable love, then truly some of the very soul of Jesus streamed out and entered into Peter's wavering spirit, and there took the form of abiding penitence and life-long shame for his past cowardice. Thus in another form the virtue or force of Christ was with Peter even to the end. The remedy for one man's mortal malady of the soul has often been procured by the prolonged suffering of his fellow-man. And how, then, can we reasonably deny that vicarious suffering is a potent force in the moral and spiritual world? It often happens that one soul

casts its mantle over another, and thereby alters the whole course of the life thus influenced. We sometimes inspire each other in the same way that God inspires us, only to a much smaller extent. But in the "barren and dry land" of Deism inspiration was practically exhausted, and the creative energies had fainted. The once omnipresent and omnific Jehovah had become almost as powerless as Baal.

In this age we can well see that, even if it were possible, it would not be desirable that each man should save his soul by his own solitary efforts. That would greatly aggravate selfishness, and render our fellow-men less interesting to us than they now are. The finest fruit of the spiritual world must ripen gradually and slowly. Much of the most precious sweetness of human goodness would be lost, if this goodness were forced on in a hot-house. Too speedy a salvation would mean a very imperfect salvation. God loves His creatures too well to suffer them to be saved in a meagre and stunted sort of way. The *social* instinct in man throws much light over the mystery of vicarious suffering. Unless this instinct shall abide in man, he cannot be saved adequately; and therefore it must not prematurely detach itself from the shattered ship of a sinful and wrecked humanity. It is better to be lost with sinners, out of affection for them, than to save ourselves after the

fashion of the "wise virgins." For, if we thus saved ourselves from suffering, we should at the same time remove ourselves from that divine school of love, in which God gradually trains us till we become partakers of His own nature. God is Love; and, therefore, if salvation takes us away from love, it takes us away from God. Only by vicarious suffering, only by helping and loving others, can we be educated up to understanding and sympathizing with God's love for His children. If the old proverb that we hate those whom we have injured be true, it is equally true that we love those whom we have helped and comforted. And so we are allowed to suffer for others, in order that we may learn to love them. And thus, paradoxical though it may seem, St. Paul was yearning after the very grandest and most complete salvation of all when he wished to go to hell, when he exclaimed so vehemently from the depths of his passionate and tender heart, "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren's sake." St. Paul wished to drink of his divine Master's sacred cup of vicarious suffering, well knowing that thus his whole nature would be enlarged and glorified, that thus in apparent damnation he would find the most real salvation; that though he might no longer know Christ after the flesh, he would know Him all the better after the spirit; that though Christ might no longer be *near* him, He would be *in* him—in him as

a veritable well of purest sympathy springing up into life eternal.

The social instinct in man, which feeds itself so greatly on vicarious suffering, is at once the germ of morality and its noblest bloom and consummation. This social instinct is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, of goodness, the very life-blood of the Eternal Father in the veins of His children. To man's social instinct we may trace the birth-throes of goodness ; and it is this same instinct which secures to human goodness its transfiguration and apotheosis. From the blind fidelity and love of the lower animals up to the glorious self-sacrifice of the martyr, the social instinct is the animating motive. Love is the real root of all human nobleness. The *via dolorosa* of the universe, the upward path, the way to genuine redemption, is red with the blood of affection, poured out like water, for the sake of others. This path is red with the blood of faithful and loyal animals, red with the blood of gentle and unselfish souls in every age, red with the blood of frail and erring souls made strong by the might of love, red with the blood of sinners, red with the blood of heroes, red with the blood of saints, red with the indelible crimson stains of that great, all-pitying heart which humanity so justly loves above and beyond all others. Even the snow-capped Alpine peaks of loftiest thought are red with the blood of intrepid

pioneers, sorrowfully surveying a land which they may not enter themselves. Without this "shedding of blood" there is no remission of sins, no escape from the fetters of ancestral evil, no deliverance from slavery and bondage.

Most justly does the Book of Revelation tell us that in the midst of the great Creator's throne is "a Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world." The whole world is based on vicarious suffering. This tragical and sublime mystery is the very soul of all real progress. The pierced heart of unselfish and self-sacrificing affection is in truth "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world," "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." When, in some higher world, the whole marvellous process of evolution is disclosed to us; when we see how mighty an agency love has been in mitigating the keen misery of the struggle for existence, like the angel strengthening Jesus in His agony; when we see ever new and higher forms of life quickened and evoked by the ceaseless outpouring of the blood of the Lamb, the blood of human affection, then at length we shall realize the full meaning and the Godlike glory of vicarious suffering, and shall know that in no other way could men have been "made partakers of the Divine nature." Then shall the whole creation, which now travails in pain together, offer up to God its glad thanksgivings for His

“unspeakable gift” of ennobling sorrow and profound, soul-piercing sympathy. Then shall the voices of many angels cry aloud, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.” Then at last shall all despondency for ever pass away from the scarred hearts of the sympathetic. They shall know that their labour “has not been in vain in the Lord.” From east and west, from north and south, shall be gathered from afar outcasts redeemed by vicarious suffering. Sorrowing compassion shall at length grow glad. “Her (unknown) children shall rise up and call her blessed”; and, even though her garments be somewhat stained with the clay impressed upon them by her wandering prodigals, this large-souled mother shall have her own peculiar joy, and shall hear the wise and the great say of her, “Many have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.” To be near to the sacred heart of Christ will be the best reward for this deep human compassion. And what the joys of Christ shall be we know quite well. “He shall see of the travail of his soul,

and shall be satisfied ; by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities."

Vicarious suffering is indeed a deep mystery, but it is a blessed and ennobling mystery. Man, in his lowly condition, may well wonder at it, as Mary was "troubled" in mind when it was announced to her that the Redeemer should be born of her, so that from henceforth all generations should call her blessed. Throughout the long ages of development, suffering sympathy is to man the true friend and deliverer. Sympathy is the grandest and most abiding sacrament of love, in which brother nourishes brother, and the aching pain of isolation and finiteness passes away. It would be sad and disheartening indeed to think that we had to save our own souls alone and unaided. It is most cheering and strengthening to believe that the sufferings and the nobleness of others may in some strange way be made available for our redemption. Perhaps salvation, like happiness, is best procured by not seeking it directly. We must in some ways cultivate a divine carelessness. We must lose our souls, that we may the more truly find them. We must make it our chief business to save others ; and then they will save us. In some respects our souls are like musical instruments, on which *others* must play, to evoke their latent sweetest strains. Even our Lord was not self-sufficing, when here on

earth. In the hour of His great agony at Gethsemane He longed for the sympathy and aid of the slumbering disciples ; and perhaps their seeming indifference to His woe added the keenest pang of all to His multiplied sufferings.

Christianity is essentially a religion of sympathy, and not of isolation. The "wise virgins" were very imperfect Christians. They knew not that their oil might be miraculously increased by large-hearted generosity. They understood not the great fundamental saying of our beloved Master, "He that keepeth his life shall lose it"; and until we do understand and act upon that wise paradox, we can never enter into the real meaning of the teaching of Jesus. We must "seek first the kingdom of God," we must first devote ourselves to some high and unselfish pursuit ; and then all good things will come to us in due time, and amongst other things our place in the kingdom of God.

Many a man who stays at home, and broods over his own spiritual condition, would act far more wisely if he were to cease thinking about his own salvation, and go forth to help and save his neighbours. We should make to ourselves friends amongst the creatures of God, and trust that they will hereafter receive us "into everlasting habitations," even though our friendly diligence in working for others should perchance have tarnished the white lustre of our wedding

garments. We cannot be like Christ till we have learnt deep pity and love for the human race ; in no other way is genuine salvation possible. This is the real salvation, compared to which all other kinds of salvation are only nominal, the vain fig-leaves of an unreal and "imputed" righteousness. And if we wish gradually to learn to love our fellow-men, the best way is to do services for them. Vicarious suffering will teach us love. We may sometimes find salvation in a hospital, when we have sought it vainly in a church. Thus, also, will the hearts of others be opened to us, and they will help to save us, though we cannot save ourselves. The poorest soul on earth, which by sympathy is privileged to avail itself of the great "communion of the saints," is richer far than the cold soul of some spiritual Dives, who lives in self-contained and self-satisfied isolation. When our hearts are cold and dead, great warm coals of fire are sometimes brought to us by the vivid sympathy of others. And thus angels come and strengthen us.

But I must now turn to sadder and more mysterious aspects of vicarious suffering. Some of these aspects are so unspeakably sad that it is only in the light of a future life that I can bear to gaze upon them. By God's help I must now walk boldly through the very "valley of the shadow of death." We do but skim over the surface of the deep mystery of vicarious suffering, unless we recognize the fact that the

spiritual world is full of wasted lives, of marvellous abortions, of grand and heroic failures, of illustrious scapegoats dying in the bleak wilderness of ignominy and defeat, bearing away the sins of the many, and yet by them misunderstood, condemned, and anathematized. In many respects these outcast scapegoats of the spiritual world are the truest saviours of our race, though by commonplace religionists they "are numbered with the transgressors," and die unhealed and unredeemed, and "make their graves with the wicked." Here amidst the blasted ruins of the noblest moral materials, is the true "valley of the shadow of death," a valley untrodden by the commonplace, a valley resounding with the mournful ghost-like voices of the slain pioneers of the human race, a land of thickest gloom, whose "sun has been turned into darkness, and its moon into blood"; a land now, for the most part, lighted only by the faint phosphorescent glimmerings of decayed spiritual splendours, a veritable Golgotha, full of the grinning skulls of the world's noblest possibilities.

Yet we must not turn back, but rather diligently explore this terrific region. For here chiefly dwells the Sublime; here are most truly revealed Infinity and Eternity. Here, amidst the hopeless wreck of the actual, gleams through thick mists the deathless beauty of the unknown Ideal. Here, amidst the most frightful precipices and yawning chasms of the

moral world, are faintly descried the dim outlines of the mighty Himalayas of a Godlike holiness, radiant with the celestial purity of their snow-white peaks, alike untrodden and unstained by man. The world's majestic failures are a sorrowful hint of God's inexhaustible resources. Eyes saddened by despairing grief are, in some ways, best suited to "behold the land that is very far off." In the hell of grandest elemental moral strife we may often best discern the purpose and meaning of the universe. There, on the grim walls of spiritual ignominy and disaster, we may read the awful but cheering handwriting of Infinity and Eternity. "The Lord also thundered out of heaven, and the Highest gave His thunder, hailstones, and coals of fire. The springs of waters were seen, and *the foundations of the round world were discovered* at Thy chiding, O Lord, at the blasting of the breath of Thy displeasure." Great sinners seldom doubt the reality of a life to come. One hour of the Sublime often teaches us more than long years of ordinary study. It often happens that we cannot find traces of God's working on the surface of human life, but must dig down, through stratum after stratum, till we come to the elemental depths. "If I go down into hell, Thou art there also."

I suppose that no thoughtful person would think of denying the fact that predestined failure is the lot of many noble natures here on earth. They are

stepping-stones on which *others* "rise to higher things." Of each of them we might truly affirm that he is thus addressed by others, "Bow down, that we may go over." And, in meek obedience, he complies; so that we write concerning him, "And thou hast laid thy body on the ground, and as the street to them that went over." Such souls are scapegoats of the race, bearing away the deficiencies and the sins of many into the wilderness of isolation, despondency, and disaster. They drink to the very dregs the cup of ancestral sinfulness, and their brethren thereby escape that fatal heritage of the soul. It seems as if it were necessary that they should be lost, in order that others may be saved. Consciously or unconsciously, they suck out the poison from the wounds of the human race.

Emerson, in his Essay on Fate, brings out plainly enough this terrible aspect of vicarious suffering. He says, "How shall a man escape from his ancestors, or draw off from his veins the black drop which he drew from his father's or his mother's life? It often appears in a family as if all the qualities of the progenitors were potted in several jars—some ruling quality in each son or daughter of the house—and sometimes the unmixed temperament, the rank, unmitigated elixir, the family vice, is drawn off in a separate individual, and the others are proportionally relieved. We sometimes see a change of expression

in our companion, and say, his father or his mother comes to the windows of his eyes, and sometimes a remote relative. In different hours a man represents each of several of his ancestors, as if there were seven or eight of us rolled up in each man's skin—seven or eight ancestors at least : and they constitute the variety of notes for that new piece of music which his life is." Whilst thinking over these deep, sad words of the sage, our feelings naturally express themselves in the beautiful words of an old Arabian prayer ; we beseech God to "be merciful to the wicked," and add as a reason, "to the good Thou hast already been sufficiently merciful in making them good." It is sad to be forced to drink of the bitter cup of the martyr's sorrow without the glory of the martyr's compensating crown.

Nothing is gained by ignoring proved facts of man's moral nature. It is of no use to "heal man's hurt slightly," or to cry peace, when in truth there is no peace. As Emerson again remarks, "We cannot trifle with this reality, this cropping out in our planted gardens of the core of the world. No picture of life can have any veracity that does not admit the odious facts. A man's power is hooped in by a necessity, which, by many experiments, he touches on every side, until he learns its arc." It is best to face steadily even the most sorrowful mysteries of life. Even when larger knowledge does but "increase sorrow," it is

still best to say to the Eternal Wisdom, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." The Hebrew prophet knew well the immense educational value of profoundest tribulation of the soul. Isaiah says, "Thy heart shall fear, and be enlarged." So assuredly it has often been. The tender heart of the poet Cowper, so scarred and rent by fear, was yet so splendidly "enlarged" that it became a "hiding-place and a refuge" even for the lowliest of suffering animals and even for the foulest of sinners. The old prophet knew well the deep mystery of spiritual progress through suffering and despair, when he wrote, "I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living.—I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward." "I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul." "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit; so wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live." Who can doubt that Job's heart and soul were greatly "enlarged" by his prolonged and wasting "fear," by his hopeless grappling with the world's insoluble enigmas?

Nature seems utterly careless as to the salvation of individuals. She evidently does not believe in an eternal hell; or else she could not act as she does. Perhaps her deep, latent optimism, her firm faith in the final "restitution of all things," makes her reckon the sufferings of time as of no real weight when com-

pared with the crowning glories of eternity. At any rate, in order to develop the race, Nature thinks nothing of trampling upon the happiness of individuals here on earth. For peace and happiness, a symmetrical and harmonious development is best for each man; but for enriching the collective life of the world, a series of abnormal and almost monstrous developments is best. So far as joy and success are concerned, age after age Nature deems it "expedient that one man should die for the people." The very sins of individuals are often used by Nature as manure to fertilize the field of humanity at large. Many must, for a time, go to hell, in order that the race may eventually reach heaven. Many souls must live and die in saddest bewilderment and doubt, in order that *others* may attain a saving faith. Only by exhausting all possible errors can mankind reach real truth. Many a man's moral life is simply a long *reductio ad absurdum* of certain methods or theories, for the instruction and benefit of others. He thus "saves others," just *because* he signally fails to "save himself." Moreover, Nature, in her strange wastefulness, appears to use some of the very loftiest souls, as the Spartans made the helots drunk, to disgust others with sin. Sin appears "the more exceeding sinful" when it is seen spoiling the very best moral materials.

To the really thoughtful and large-hearted there is

a marvellous pathos in the saddest forms of vicarious suffering. In these the Sublime is ever calling upon us to behold its glory, to eat of its bread, and drink of the wine which it has mingled. Nowhere else on earth do we meet with such divine grandeur and such noble elevation. All the brilliant heroism of ancient Greece and Rome, glorious though it was, grows faint and pale before this forlorn heroism of the world's most true vicarious sufferers. It was great to lay down one's bodily life for the love of friends, but it is greater to be willing to be lost in the long dark night of moral failure and despair. It is as if some greater Prometheus should tear out of his suffering heart even its own nobleness and moral elevation, and should bestow even that last source of consolation on others. It is as if Job should relinquish even his "integrity," and bestow on others even that "widow's mite" of inward satisfaction. Perhaps it was some perception of this which made St. Paul wish himself "accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake"; it may be that the apostle felt that the spiritual edifice of an exalted character could not receive its last crowning touch of perfected sublimity without venturing into hell. In a moral sense to be "poor, yet making many rich," is a blessed fate. There is a divine poverty which is nobler than any spiritual wealth. The paradox of Jesus is an abiding truth: "He that keepeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth

it shall keep it unto life eternal." Emerson says wisely,

" When half-Gods go,
The Gods arrive."

A divine goodness takes the place of earthly goodness. Self-sacrifice is fed and nourished from the unseen central fires of the spiritual universe. Now, as in the days of old, "The bush burns, and is not consumed." It is when humanity has risen from the grave of its old animal selfishness that it descends into hell, and preaches to forlorn prisoners.

Probably the world contains no grander spectacle than that of some spiritual Moses, hopeless for himself, but full of hope for others, surveying the "promised land" of genuine freedom which he may not enter himself. Perhaps sympathy is never so exalted and sublimated from all imperfections, never clothed in such "glorious apparel" of almost divine beauty and splendour, as when some worn and baffled Moses of the moral wilderness, feeling that the "iron" of inherited evil has "entered into his soul" and hopelessly fettered it, yet, on his lonely Pisgah height, surveys the smiling plenteousness of the "promised land" of moral freedom, and rejoices that others shall hereafter enter it, though the sad burden of vicarious suffering demands that he should die outside it. "Furthermore, the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, and swore that I should not

go over Jordan"; "But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan, but ye shall go over and possess that good land." How many an illustrious doubter, how many an unsuccessful seeker after knowledge and goodness, how many a baffled and sin-stained pioneer of the moral world, might well have expressed its inmost feelings in that loving hopelessness, in that divine despair, in that sacred onward-looking forlornness of this cry of Moses! Truly, the spirit of the great Son of Man must have been nigh to the heart of Moses when he uttered those pathetic words; and perhaps that tender spirit of Jesus consoled the scarred pilgrim heart of the baffled Hebrew leader by whispering in his dying ears His own beautiful description of the true mission of the very greatest of God's prophets, "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

And the old far-off cry of the unselfish Hebrew leader was destined to be repeated by another Christ-like sufferer in later days, when, in the very spirit of Moses at Pisgah, the darkened soul of the gentle poet Cowper poured forth its plaintive sublimity of pity, its infinite trust in the divine love for all *except the poet himself*. In some of Cowper's piercing and pathetic hymns we can almost hear him saying, "But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan; but ye shall go over, and possess that good land." Well might the genius of Mrs. Browning offer up its

beautiful tribute of passionate sympathy over the
castaway's grave, and say,

"O poets, from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless
singing."

Of course all our ordinary *conventional* ideas of heaven and hell are utterly overthrown by a true realization of this great mystery of vicarious suffering. When we realize the unity of the human race, that we are all members one of another, then there follows immediately the "resurrection from the dead" of a great army of vanquished sinners, on whose tortured hearts experiments were performed for the benefit of mankind at large. In many ways our deepest sympathy and our most genuine admiration are given to the bold explorers of the spiritual world, its lonely pioneers, its magnificent failures, its suggestive abortions, its outcast scapegoats. Their deep, pathetic "hunger and thirst after righteousness" seem to us much nobler than the unaspiring and almost self-satisfied virtuousness of ordinary religious people. We console ourselves by thinking that it was where there was "no *depth* of earth" that the good seed sprung up quickly. We remember that the morally grotesque or ugly is sometimes only the sublime in the making. Moreover, the autumnal glories of spiritual defeat and decay often move our hearts more deeply than any of the myriad beauties of the spiritual

spring time. To vivid imaginations some sunsets are far more suggestive than any risings of the sun. Darkness and gloom do but prepare the way for the thrilling, ethereal, and mystic splendours of night, when the finite shrinks into nothingness before the fiery epiphany of the Infinite. The despair of Elijah beneath the juniper tree touches our inmost souls far more than the hopefulness of ordinary men. Even though it should appear that "the hand of the Lord has gone out against" the troubled and unsuccessful seekers after holiness, we would fain still linger near them, as St. John lingered near the cross of his Master. Most unwillingly do we leave this realm of deepest pathos, this most precious spiritual Gethsemane. Again and again we turn back with irrepressible sympathy, and cry to these wounded and baffled eagles of the spiritual world,

"O unstrung wills, O broken hearts,
A last, a last farewell."*

And yet it is not a last farewell. We believe firmly that we shall meet again hereafter, when the dire "strife is o'er, the victory won." Commonplace religionists, with their narrow stupidity and their ignorant harshness, may be quite prepared to say to heroic outcasts clothed in the filthy garments of unconquered evil, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting

* These lines are borrowed from Mr. Matthew Arnold.

fire." But we know "that the Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." And we believe that on the scarred hearts of many of this world's sinners the piercing eyes of the great Son of Man will see indelibly engraved that "new name which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it," the new name of profoundest sympathy, the eloquent symbol of vicarious suffering. And so, even now, when the confusing din of religious bigotry is hushed, from afar we seem to hear the Divine Spirit saying of these struggling vanquished spirits, more truly than of any others of the sons of men, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple ; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." If, at the last judgment, the Pharisees of another world shall point scornfully to the moral stains of these great sufferers, it may be that the larger wisdom of the angels will reveal the abiding good that came out of their vain endeavours, and say

once more of them what was formerly said of their divine leader, "They saved others, themselves they could not save."

Our only real consolation, when saddened by the apparent waste of the noblest materials in the spiritual world, is to realize the essential unity of the human race, and the many various ways in which the limitations and failures of some men prepare the road for the splendid successes of other men. One "sows" in tears of despondency and despair; and another "reaps" in the joy of successful achievement. We can see this happening in many different departments of life. In the intellectual world it is often expedient that one man should be sacrificed for the race. For instance, David Hume's total want of spirituality, though extremely injurious to him individually, was probably highly beneficial to the race in one way, viz., by showing to what monstrous conclusions intellect by itself was likely to lead. And the very infirmities and aberrations of the intellect, in some men, are full of instruction for the race at large. Unrestrained imagination often mars or destroys the life of its possessor, as it did that of Rousseau, but adds much to the world's abiding mental wealth. It is not without deep significance that wise Greek teachers reckoned madness as a source of inspiration. The most vivid and exalted imagination is often perilously near to a kind of madness. Like St. Paul, it does

not know whether it is in the body or out of the body. The ardent Idealist must always seem half mad to the prosaic school of common sense. Genius is necessarily eccentric, and sometimes appears as if it were the product of disease. It is often greatly stimulated and enhanced by suffering or by morbid states of the bodily organs. Moreover, virtue often seems literally to "go out" from the souls of great benefactors of our race, and leave them in powerlessness and darkness. Great humourists often themselves suffer from profound melancholy. They bestow on others all their precious treasures of mirth and wit, and so have none left for themselves. The hearts of great poets are sometimes withered and desiccated by the streaming forth of their inner life into their writings.

Even as regards bodily sufferings, we can see plainly how one man's failure helps the success of others. In ordinary life we see daily how the bodily weakness of one man helps to refine, chasten, and etherealize the somewhat unspiritual and coarse robustness of the vigorous. And thus, from their couch of pain and irksome inactivity, it is frequently given to weary invalids to aid the strong and active. They often see most deeply into the problems of life who are withdrawn from its confusing din. The strong often greatly need to learn compassion and tenderness from the weak. Harshness is very commonly the besetting sin of those who are always well as regards bodily

strength. We may see traces of this in the life of Dr. Arnold of Rugby. He much needed to learn what only the weak and suffering could teach him. Here, then, is real work for the feeble and incapacitated in body. They can often greatly improve the vigorous; they can be as eyes to short-sighted Samsons of the moral world. And this is a blessed function; for moral vigour often thwarts its own objects by want of insight, discrimination, and pitifulness. Vigour is frequently turned into rigour; men forget that the teaching of John the Baptist was only preparatory to the more persuasive teaching of Jesus. This power to discipline and guide the strong is full of encouragement for bodily sufferers; to them it is a cup of strengthening grace in their long unrest and weariness.

Even as regards the devastating havoc wrought by sin, I think that we may find some consolation, if we look carefully. The spiritual poisons of individuals are often turned into tonics for the race. For individual happiness a speedy salvation, a calm and peaceful moral development, is far best; but for elevating and redeeming mankind at large, a stormy and tempestuous development is more useful. The "still small voice," so blessed for the individual spirit, is not heard by the mass of men; but the stormy wind, the fire, and the earthquake speak forcibly to the hearts of all. Those who are "scarcely saved,"

"saved though as by fire," are ever the world's most eloquent preachers. Those born in the storm of mightiest elemental strife are ever the most impressive moral guides to the mass of mankind. Their strange Titanic force moves the world whether it will or no. Compared to these the power of ordinary good men is small indeed. St. Paul, Augustine, Luther, Bunyan, Burns, have shaken the inmost hearts of men, as they never were shaken by any Pusey or Keble. These great sufferers had learnt the one universal language of the human heart. Satan *had* cast out Satan in their case. Sinfulness and its consequent agonies had killed and withered all paltry moral provincialism and spiritual sectarianism. Through them spoke Nature, not the church. They "shocked," and yet irresistibly allured, men's wondering ears with "a note breathed from the everlasting throat." All spiritual dialects became as one. "Parthians, Medes, Elamites," and all earth's other multitudinous tribes heard these teachers proclaiming in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. The most powerful preachers are those who come from the wild "Edom" of Nature's tempestuous lawlessness, with garments red with blood. These are they who have "trodden the wine-press alone," and therefore henceforth speak imperiously, "speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

Thus out of evil God often brings lasting good in

the moral world. Those who cannot, in any adequate sense, save themselves, yet save others all the more effectually. How greatly would the power and impressiveness of Robert Burns have been diminished without his strong animal nature ; and yet that nature hopelessly wrecked him in this life. This nature was a sort of background of fiery agony, from which proceeded the most brilliant, though fitful, flashes of moral illumination. "The bush burned, and *was* consumed." Here truly was vicarious suffering. Again, in reading the confessions of the great Augustine, who does not feel that half, at least, of their grandeur and pathos arises from the fact that the saint had once been a storm-tossed and weary-hearted sinner? In really great natures it seems to me as if the more vehement forms of sinfulness often do at least two real services to our race ; they banish pedantry and Shibboleths, to make room for pathos ; and they do much towards revealing immortality. The very agony of the moral nature kindles in it a burning thirst for a larger and fuller life. Christ reveals "life and immortality" in hell.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, in the "Scarlet Letter," admirably describes the mingled good and evil which resulted from the secret sinfulness of the minister, Arthur Dimmesdale. On the one hand, it prevented him from climbing "the high mountain peaks of faith and sanctity" to which he might otherwise

have attained; and, on the other hand, his burden of sinfulness was beneficial to others. "It kept him down on a level with the lowest—him, the man of ethereal attributes, whose voice the angels might else have listened to and answered. But this very burden it was that gave him sympathies so intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind, so that his heart vibrated in unison with theirs, and received their pain into itself, and sent its own throb of pain through a thousand other hearts, in gushes of sad, persuasive eloquence." In fact, his ineradicable remorse, begotten of his sin, acted as a talisman to open the hearts of others. He "saved others" just *because* he "could not save himself." By this tortured and erring spirit, it might well have been said, in a sense far deeper than that in which St. Paul used the words, "To depart, and to be with Christ, is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." His realized sinfulness was redeeming the world of his hearers. It made him more deeply human than he would otherwise have been, and so he moved the hearts of others more. For the most deeply moving element in all sermons is a kind of pathetic plaintiveness; a numbering of one's self with transgressors; a conscious nearness to the hearts of the erring; a vivid sympathy swallowing up all condemnation; a counting that one has not already attained; the soft, low music of the

sorrowing human spirit, as it stretches forth beseeching hands to the long-lost Infinite. Thus, what the ecclesiastical world usually calls saints, are not the most effective preachers. Of no Pusey or Keble was it ever said truly that "then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners, for to hear him." It seems as if the human nature of Jesus were indeed absolutely unique—that wonderful union of purest holiness and deepest compassion and love for sinners. The despair of the poet Cowper gives to his hymns a piercing quality not found in the "Christian Year."

Lastly, I think that the genius of Hawthorne and of Victor Hugo revealed to them that great secret of the spiritual world, viz., that from redeemed sinfulness usually proceed the very deepest compassion and love. The blessing, "*quia multum amavit*"—for she loved much—was not said over one who had never done wrong. Hester Prynne's "scarlet letter" became a blessed emblem of unfailing pity. "Elsewhere the token of sin, it was the taper of the sick chamber. It had even thrown its gleam, in the sufferer's hard extremity, across the verge of time." "Her breast, with its badge of shame, was but the softer pillow for the head that needed one." And even so it was with Victor Hugo's glorious outcast, Jean Valjean. He became a sort of incarnate compassion; so that to a great extent seem justly applicable to him the noble

words of an ancient prophet, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them ; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." Yes, the outcast became a real saviour. As Jean Valjean "bare and carried" his fellow-man through the loathsome subterranean sewers of Paris, one thinks that the inmost heart of his first true friend, the saintly Bishop Myriel, must have been filled with deepest joy, as he heard the voice of the great Son of Man saying of his beloved convert, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" ; "Therefore I say unto you, his sins which were many are forgiven, for he loved much."

Thus vicarious suffering is to me a kind of open door through which I gaze eagerly into the highest heavens. My heart, "fears, and is enlarged." My sorrow is turned into joy. The meaning of life grows plain to me, viz., that it is a school in which man learns to love. Death now smiles upon me ; for I know that it is but a sacrament of the Sublime. In the hell of hopeless perplexity and grief I have found the marred form of the great Son of Man. Vicarious suffering now gleams with the unearthly splendour of God's deathless benignity. I know that "love never faileth," never really misses its aim. I know that God's real object is to "make us partakers of the divine nature," to fill our hearts, till they overflow, with His

own unfathomable compassion. And so I find myself exclaiming gratefully, as I gaze around on the ever-active redeeming agency of pity and affection, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

give us no adequate idea of the mighty wonders of the ocean's deeps. If, on the other hand, we exaggerate the revelation of God given us in our own faculties, we are fairly liable to the reproach of making the First Cause "altogether such an one as ourselves."

I am persuaded that the position which I took up is in reality that of reasonable Christianity. I am convinced that St. Paul felt painfully the extreme limitations of our knowledge in this life; that after carefully setting forth the dim outlines of spiritual truths, of "the things which are most surely believed among us," he would instinctively have added the qualifying and melancholy confession, "And now we see through a glass, darkly." I believe that Christianity declares that we have light enough to guide us on our way, but not enough to disperse the encompassing darkness around us. I believe that Judaism and our religion are at one in teaching that we cannot know God as He is in Himself, but only through emblems and symbols. The Lord said unto Moses, "Thou canst not see my face." Yet the Lord also said, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee." Thus Moses knew God, and yet knew Him not. He had caught a real glimpse of the divine goodness, accommodated to his earthly faculties of vision; but he by no means thought

that he knew the inner being of the dread Jehovah.

The great Hebrew prophets thought that they did know *in what direction* some at least of the divine attributes were ; but, at the same time, they made no claim to have seen them in their intrinsic and undiluted splendour. Dimly, and through thick mists of besetting ignorance and infirmity, their worn eyes descried the faint outlines of "the land that is very far off," and of the eternal hills "whence cometh our help." They believed in the existence of an ideal Being, "whom, not having seen, they loved," the source of all beauty, One "fairer than the children of men." This great mysterious Being was indeed to the ancient Hebrews the light of life, the very basis of existence, the I AM, the only abiding reality, before whose changeless steadfastness man is but a fugitive appearance, which "cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down ; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." But though God's haunting presence supported all finite life, yet God's essence none might know. That baffled all man's prolonged efforts to understand it. So that the deepest piety expressed itself in words of humble ignorance—in words that declared at once the operative reality of the Divine existence, and its persistent inscrutability : "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps

are not known." "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep." "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." These latter words are an apt expression of the spiritual feelings of those who are neither Atheists, nor Athanasians, nor Hegelians; who are persuaded that there is a God, and a God who lives and works, and yet cannot in any adequate way find Him here on earth.

It is somewhat strange that none of my many critics have understood my real views on this subject. I have been supposed to teach ordinary Agnosticism, as if there were no middle ground between the omniscience of some Hegelians and the complete Agnosticism of men like Professor Huxley; as if faith was not only a discreditable, but also an almost impossible state of mind; as if reason was in bondage to mathematics, and never received any divine command to "launch out into the deep" of probable truths, and "let down its net for a draught." What *is* sober-minded faith but venturesome reason, reason which might say of itself,

"The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given.
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
I am borne, darkly, fearfully, afar"?

Not one of my critics seems to admit the doctrine of Bishop Butler, that probability is the very guide of life ; and yet in our ordinary affairs we do not hesitate to act on probabilities. Even our knowledge of the external world is apparent rather than real. We are "shut out to the rind" of Nature ; we know effects, but not causes. Our knowledge of matter is but skin-deep. What we ambitiously call the laws of Nature are in truth nothing but our own imperfect generalizations, derived from partial observations carried on in a remote province of the universe. They give us no right to dogmatize about the universe as a whole. Our knowledge of our fellow-men is also very imperfect and dependent on inference. We do not actually know the inner nature of our friend's being, but we confidently infer it, and then believe it, and act accordingly. In our ordinary life it is literally true that "we walk by faith, and not by sight." Logic cannot fathom a great number of the difficulties that are most really interesting to us. Our dim beliefs or guesses often far outrun our knowledge ; perhaps because the former are a sort of transfiguration of the old instincts which work almost unerringly in the lower animals. If a man will never act till he has irresistible knowledge, he will for the most part not act at all. Prudence would be frozen into vacillation or inertness. As Pascal taught, "Reason confutes the dogmatists, Nature the Pyrrhonists."

It is not true that we give up the reasonable claims of religion upon men's attention, when we admit that on earth we have no adequate or absolute knowledge of spiritual verities. Twilight may have many disadvantages ; but we use it readily enough, when we cannot have broad day and clear sunshine. If a man walking in darkness has a lantern which suffices to guide his steps safely, he would be most unwise to throw it away in disgust because its illumination extended no further. We must not act like idle servants, who should refuse to work because they had only the light of candles in the long evenings of winter. Very possibly, our having to act on evidence falling far short of proof may be an essential part of our training here on earth. "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." The extremity or poverty of our intellect is often the opportunity of our moral nature. Nay more, our intellect itself is often greatly strengthened by grappling with almost insuperable difficulties. A mind such as ours, dealing only with certainties, would not be adequately developed. Reason is expanded by being venture-some. Imagination is naturally an explorer and a pioneer. Mathematics alone would be a most imperfect education for us.

The cause of a wise, devout, and Christian agnosticism has suffered immensely from the strange and repulsive writings of the late Dean Mansel on this

subject. His views were founded on a mutilated fragment of truth. He heard God saying, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways"; but he did not hear what immediately follows: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." God is plainly super-human; whereas, for ought that Manselism could say, he might be *infra*-human. Mill's attack on Mansel's teaching has never been answered. There can be no doubt that to logical and daring minds Mansel's famous Bampton Lectures must appear to be a kind of introduction to Atheism. If God's goodness is totally different from ours, it inevitably follows that we can have no true idea at all concerning the Creator's nature. And so it would be just as pious to say that He is what we call cruel, as to say that He is what we call merciful. And with regard to the mind or intellect of God, it would be just as reasonable to say that it is impersonal as to say that it is personal. Mansel's position is fairly open to the attacks of Mr. Matthew Arnold. The Dean, however, was constrained by his Christianity to abate somewhat of the rigour of his logic, and to concede, contrary to his own fundamental principles, that the noblest moral qualities in man have some very faint resemblance to the divine attributes. Otherwise, the imitation of Christ as a divine being, or the

imitation of the Father himself, would be meaningless and impossible; and so practical Christianity would be destroyed at its very roots. Consequently, Mill presses home this concession of Mansel's, and asks whether the likeness between the noblest qualities in man and the corresponding qualities in God is a likeness *in essence*, or not. If the Dean conceded that the likeness was in essence, then his whole elaborate theory would fall to the ground. On the other hand, if he maintained that the likeness was not in essence, it would follow that it was not a real and important likeness at all; and practical religion, seeking conformity to the divine image, would be as baseless as ever.

Surely the right view on this subject is that we *do know*, as it were, *the direction* in which some of the divine attributes lie, that we have good grounds for believing that God's goodness is in its essence akin to ours. So far we are not Agnostics. But then we also believe that God is a great deal more than we can conceive — personal and something more, holy in our human sense, and also something more. And it is with regard to this something more, this vast hidden abyss of the divine nature, that we are reasonably Agnostic. We do not believe that our human virtues are copies in miniature of the divine perfections. In the language of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we

might express our meaning by saying that the grandest human qualities "have a shadow" of divine glories, and "not the very image of the things." They are only a sort of remote and inadequate incarnation of God. Of them we cannot say what was said of Christ, that they are "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person."

Hence all arguments from the human to the divine must ever be to some extent precarious, though in some sense quite legitimate. We are firmly enough persuaded that God cannot be intrinsically less good than the best of men; and so we say fearlessly, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" But how far better God may be, and to what extent this better may swallow up, without cancelling, the good, we cannot even dimly conjecture. Here faith and ignorance join hands in lowliest adoration. Here we erect an altar to "the unknown God." Here we adore the far-off Ideal. Here, unfettered by a transitional logic, the soul dreams its dreams of supersensual and supernatural splendour, to which the intellect cannot give definite shape or form. Imagination is to us an abiding prophet of the unknown God, a high priest of the Creator's inexhaustible potentialities, an awe-struck hierophant sometimes blasted with excess of light, yearning, and yet fearing, to gaze on those ineffable

mysteries of God "which the angels desire to look into," and desire in vain. The loftiest devotion ever outsoars mere logic. It does not care for consistency; it embraces paradoxes; and, pierced at once with the commingling raptures of entranced knowledge and wondering ignorance, it cries aloud to the unseen, but much loved, Lord of the universe,

"Holy, Holy, Holy, though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see."

And as arid logicians hear these fervent outpourings of the soul, they smile with a scornful sense of superiority, and inquire how we know that God is holy, if the darkness does indeed hide Him. Peradventure formal logic is no adequate guide to the city of God.

Thus I think it is plain that there is such a thing as a wise and Christian Agnosticism. Many are able to adore the unseen, yet ever near Creator, who feel quite incapable of describing Him, or of mapping out His illimitable nature. An idea of God, a poor, provisional, and inadequate idea we may certainly have; a coherent idea free from all mixture of inconsistencies we certainly cannot have. Either we must be content to receive the "treasure" of religious truth in the "earthen vessels" of our very imperfect understandings, or else we cannot receive it at all. Pure unadulterated truth concerning the things

eternal is not for us whilst we are on earth. The provincialists of the universe have no right to dogmatize about its central mysteries. To a sober-minded, devout, and thoughtful seeker after God, Athanasianism must ever seem both impious and absurd. We can put no permanent labels of our devising on the ever-varying coruscations of the divine attributes. Revelation, like the wind, "bloweth where it listeth; and we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." The soul, as it advances in spiritual knowledge, is for ever outgrowing its old religious definitions. The old sign-posts are of no use to advanced pioneers. At times Athanasianism seems to us as much a foe of progress, and as essentially profane, as Materialism itself. If it be both futile and irreligious to endeavour to analyze or dissect the soul, surely it is still more so to endeavour to analyze or dissect the soul's great Lord, whose very being is essentially spirit. The thirst for explaining things is, in many ways, opposed to the deepest reverence. The logical formulas of Athanasian dogmatists are but an analogue of the scalpel of the Materialists. Spirit, because it is spirit, for ever escapes from and baffles such investigations of either sort. Hegelianism, whatever its faults may be, at least perceives this fact, and refuses to turn the transient temples of spirit into permanent prisons for it. It wisely refuses to "seek the living among the dead."

The French philosopher, Victor Cousin, has expressed clearly the views of a religious, onward-looking, and wisely conservative Agnosticism. He says, "Elsewhere we have established in some manner at once the comprehensibility and the incomprehensibility of God. . . . God, then, as the cause of the universe, reveals Himself to us ; but God is not only the cause of the universe, He is also the perfect and infinite cause, possessing in Himself, not a relative perfection which is only a degree of imperfection, but an absolute perfection, an infinitude which is not only the finite multiplied by itself in those proportions which the human mind is able always to enumerate, but a true infinitude, that is, the absolute negation of all limits in all the powers of His being. Moreover, it is not true that an indefinite effect adequately expresses an infinite cause ; hence it is not true that we are able absolutely to comprehend God by the world and by man ; for all of God is not in them." . . . "There remains, then, in God, beyond the universe and man, something unknown, impenetrable, incomprehensible. Hence, in the immeasurable spaces of the universe, and beneath all the profundities of the human soul, God escapes us in His inexhaustible infinitude, whence He is able to draw without limit new worlds, new beings, new manifestations." . . . "It is, therefore, an equal error to call God absolutely comprehensible and absolutely incom-

prehensible. * He is both invisible and present, revealed and withdrawn in Himself, in the world and out of the world, so familiar and intimate with His creatures that we see Him by opening our eyes, that we feel Him in feeling our hearts beat, and at the same time inaccessible in His impenetrable majesty ; mingled with everything, and separated from everything ; manifesting Himself in universal life, and causing scarcely an ephemeral shadow of His eternal essence to appear there ; communicating Himself without cessation, and remaining incommunicable ; at once the living God and the God concealed, 'Deus vivus et Deus absconditus.' " . . . (Cousin's "History of Philosophy," English translation.)

One friendly critic of my former sermon on "The Unknown God" remarked that I must probably think that it was by mistake that our Lord is reported to have said, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." But I do not think that my views are really inconsistent with this famous text. I thoroughly believe that the true and eternal life consists in knowledge of God and in union with Him. Only it is not very much of this sacred and awful life that is permitted to us here on earth. As yet we have, as it were, only the crumbs that fall from the table of the divine riches. Union with God, by means of genuine knowledge, is the goal of the human race, and not its

starting-point ; to us, in our present state, it remains to a very great extent an unrealized ideal. Even St. Paul, notwithstanding the abundance of the exceptional revelations vouchsafed to him, still felt that "whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." He knew well the exceeding poverty of our present knowledge of God, and was ever ready to utter the sad and humiliating confession, "And now we see through a glass, darkly." I quite believe that all that is noblest in our present life comes to us from God's blessed inspiration. I quite believe that our grandest and most satisfying hours are those in which the Eternal Father gleams upon our awe-struck hearts, and lightens our natural darkness. But these hours are comparatively few. Most of our life is passed in a dim twilight. And even our highest and most satisfying knowledge of God is but a knowledge of Him as accommodated to our imperfect and incipient faculties. We behold "as in a glass the glory of the Lord." "Now we see through a glass, darkly." God is partially manifested to us through the divine humanity of Jesus. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The Christian doctrine of the incarnation seems to me both a revelation of that part of God's nature which it most concerns us to know, and an implicit denial that we can

know God in the dread depths of His infinite being.

Moreover, it appears to me that, by pretending to anything like an adequate knowledge of God, we give great occasion "to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme." If our creeds are taken to be *descriptions* of God, it is easy enough to pour ridicule on them, as Mr. Matthew Arnold has done. But sober-minded Christians do not really look upon their creeds as descriptions of God. Rather, they are recognized as being only the record of transient and inadequate glimpses of some few aspects of God—glimpses of God in His relation to us, and not in His abiding essence. We do not pretend to accurate and definite knowledge on these high matters; we only say that we have received valuable hints and suggestions concerning them. We make no exhaustive catalogue of the Divine perfections, but only record a few of their ways of manifesting themselves to us. It would be too ambitious a thing for the inhabitants of some tiny creek to draw up a philosophy of the vast ocean, with all the mighty wonders of its inaccessible depths; but it would not be an unwise thing for these awe-struck inhabitants to keep a kind of record of the ways in which their poor dwelling-place was, from time to time, affected by the ocean's ebb and flow. The creeds of the more thoughtful amongst the devout are essentially not

much more than such a record in spiritual matters. And therefore Mr. Matthew Arnold's criticisms are, in their case, quite irrelevant.

To wisely Agnostic Christians the system called Hegelianism is often extremely irritating. It seems to have succeeded to the mantle of Athanasian infallibility. Many Hegelians talk as if they were in the happy position of having no intellectual or spiritual difficulties. They no longer "see through a glass, darkly." They seem to claim to have rid themselves of the innate and besetting infirmities of the human mind, and to have occupied a Theocentric position, from which to survey the universe. These philosophers seem fairly liable to the censure pronounced on Job, when God answered him out of the whirlwind, and forced him to realize his own ignorance: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding." Nay more, some Hegelians seem to know, not only the foundations of the earth, but the foundations of God also. They are ready to tell us just what God is and must be, and to give us, as it were, a *rationale* of the Divine development. They seem to be provided with a full account of the history of God.

Now of course this is utterly ridiculous, and it is quite out of harmony with the teaching of modern science, which forces us more than ever to realize the

fact that we are essentially provincialists of the universe. We can now see plainly enough, that it is most unlikely that beings situated as we are should be able to penetrate to the intellectual core of the universe. All our perceptions are "ex analogiâ hominis potius quam universi." But *some* Hegelians are far more modest, and to them, I think, that we all owe much. They are deserving of honour for not despairing concerning our spiritual republic. Some of them have done great service in exposing the futility of Materialism. In this respect the writings of the late Mr. Green of Balliol are of the very highest value. And I believe that the Hegelians are quite right in tenaciously holding the faith that the universe *has* a real meaning, on which it depends for its existence; that the universe is essentially rational; that there is a real order of things, *whatever that order may turn out to be*. Only, as another great writer has observed, "We do not know this meaning in its fulness, and therefore we cannot deduce from it what we can only attempt, in one universal conviction, to retrace to it." In short, our method must still be inductive, and not deductive.

In the case of the more reasonable Hegelians, such as Mr. Andrew Seth, from whose writings I gladly borrow, one scarcely sees why they should object to the views of a moderate and conservative Agnosticism. We concede to them that our knowledge is real and

not deceptive, so far as it goes ; and they often appear to concede to us that it goes only a very little way, and that some mysteries must, in all probability, remain for ever beyond the reach of finite faculties. Thus Mr. Seth says ("Scottish Philosophy," page 202), "But on the other hand there is a great deal which is unknown, and which we may predict will always remain unknown to the finite intelligence." Does not this teaching approach very nearly to Hamilton's wish to "erect an altar to the unknown God" ; to adore, as it were, the innumerable unknown potentialities of that great Being, *some* of whose attributes we do know in a dim and fragmentary sort of way ? I think, also, that the Hegelians are probably right in supposing that reason is essentially the same throughout the universe, and therefore that we may apply to one province of knowledge principles derived from another. But still there may be very many problems which our present extremely diluted reason is inadequate to deal with in any way. There may be such enormous differences in degree in reason as possessed by the various ranks in the scale of existence, as to render the workings of the loftier faculties almost or quite unintelligible to the lower ones. Incipient reason in the dog is inadequate to understand many of the most characteristic activities of his master's more developed reason.

However, the real enemies of a thoughtful Christian

Faith are not the Hegelians, who are but as sanguine pioneers beholding "the land that is very far off," and underrating the difficulties of the road to be traversed. They and we quite agree as to the final goal of humanity. As we laboriously climb the steep mountains of spiritual truth, the Hegelians and we cordially agree that they *have* a real summit, on which for ever shines the light supreme, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." But we differ as to our present stage in the ascent. Practically some of the Hegelians talk as if they had already reached the top of the mountain of vision ; whereas the Agnostic Christian is for ever exclaiming, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect" ; "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended ; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Our real foes are not the Hegelians, but teachers such as Mr. Matthew Arnold and Mr. Herbert Spencer, who declare plainly that our faith is ungrounded and intrinsically absurd, that Theism has no real basis in reason, that our belief arises from our refusing to realize difficulties. "These writers are essentially as much foes of faith as foes of knowledge in religious matters. They declare concerning the whole "promised land" of rational religious belief, that it is "a land that eateth up the

inhabitants thereof"; that thoughtful religion is for ever haunted by conflicting inconceivabilities, which, though powerless to construct or beget, are omnipotent to destroy. Reason, when exercised on the highest speculative problems of the spiritual world, is "the author of confusion"; and therefore it had better remain totally silent.

Let us proceed to consider the teaching of these our most deadly opponents. And I think that, if we consider it very carefully, we shall find it a good deal less formidable than it appears at first sight. Mr. Herbert Spencer's supposed demonstration of the inherent absurdity of all forms of Theism—see a long article of his quoted from the *Nineteenth Century* in Mr. Cotter Morison's "Service of Man," page 44—really amounts to nothing more than this, that we cannot with our present faculties form a perfectly coherent and consistent idea of God; that we cannot "by searching find out the Almighty to perfection." But what wise Theist ever supposed that we could? In our present state we can see nothing *sub specie eternitatis*, not even our own minds; so that it is no great wonder that we cannot thus see the great author of the whole universe. Fish swimming in the ocean can form no idea as to its limits, though in their daily lives actually experiencing the operation of very many of its laws.

Mr. Spencer declares that it is absurd for us to

attribute consciousness or will to the Creator, inasmuch as these imply limitations. "To believe in a divine consciousness, we must refrain from thinking what is meant by consciousness, must stop short with verbal propositions." He says that the divine consciousness as conceivable by us is "like the human consciousness, formed of successive states. And such a conception of the divine consciousness is irreconcilable with the unchangeableness otherwise alleged, and with the omniscience otherwise alleged. For a consciousness constituted of ideas and feelings caused by objects and occurrences, cannot be simultaneously occupied with all objects and all occurrences throughout the universe." "It is the same with the ascription of intelligence. Not to dwell on the seriality and limitation implied as before, we may note that intelligence, as alone conceivable by us, presupposes existence independent of it and objective to it. It is carried on in terms of changes primarily wrought by alien activities—the impressions generated by things beyond consciousness and the ideas derived from such impressions. To speak of an intelligence which exists in the absence of all such alien activities, is to use a meaningless word."

Now, I think that this criticism would be perfectly valid, *if* we professed to give a coherent account of God's consciousness and intelligence. Our critic makes it plain that these cannot be merely human

consciousness and intelligence on a larger scale. But I do not think that our opponent proves the impossibility of some kind of consciousness and intelligence in some dim way analogous to ours, not to be adequately understood by us, but still best approached by words such as those which we use to describe our own highest life. I imagine that the dog might find just the same apparently invincible obstacles, if he were to endeavour to depict to himself intelligence as it exists in his master. The higher being *must* remain more or less unintelligible to the lower. *Our* personality would probably be quite as inconceivable to the lower animals as God's is to us; so that our not being able to map out the divine consciousness scarcely seems a valid reason for denying it.

Moreover, I think that a sort of modified Pantheism enables us to a great extent to answer Mr. Spencer. The immanence of God in the whole creation does away with many of our opponent's objections. No "seriality or limitation" is needed to constitute the divine intelligence, because this intelligence is diffused throughout the whole universe, at once filling it and transcending it. God is, as it were, the soul of the universe. To Him there is no beginning and no ending. He is at once the perceiver and the thing perceived, or at least its basis. Probably the need for some alien activity, to evoke distinct consciousness of personality, is an infirmity of

our finite nature, and not of the essence of conscious personality as such. No doubt, the divine intelligence works in ways very different from those in which ours works. We can hardly suppose that God infers or syllogizes. And so as to the divine will; no doubt, *in us* "the willing of each end excludes from consciousness, for an interval, the willing of other ends, and therefore is inconsistent with that omnipresent activity which simultaneously works out an infinity of ends." It is indeed difficult to conceive an infinite Being exercising *will* at all, inasmuch as He is already possessed of unchangeable perfection; but still it seems clear that there must be in God something analogous to what we call willing.

Our real answer to arguments such as those of Mr. Spencer is, that we regard God as unknowable in His essence by us, in this life at all events. We only affirm that it seems probable that the highest things in man are faint adumbrations of eternal realities, and not by any means exact copies of them; "shadows of good things to come, and not the very images." God is now only known to us relatively and phenomenally. Probably enough, He is personal and also something more and higher, "the nameless thought, the super-personal heart," as Emerson expresses it. And, of course, this unknown element, transcending what *we* call personality, may or must involve many modes of existence quite inconceivable to us, and so may

reconcile what now appear inconsistencies and contradictions. Our present logic is but the logic of provincialists. Our highest ideas are but stairs which "slope through darkness up to God," even to the unknown God; yet these stairs are of the greatest value to us for the time. We believe that, even now, in the tiny lake of man's nature are partially mirrored the untrodden and inaccessible mountains of the divine character. *If* God has in ineffable perfection all that is highest in man, it does not signify to us, it does not hinder or frustrate the moral efficacy of our creed, if we believe that He has *also* many other qualities inconceivable to us and out of all relation to us. The dog can love his master, though the master may be a mathematician, an astronomer, or a poet.

But it is not enough to show that, for all that can be proved to the contrary, God may possibly have consciousness and intelligence. We must endeavour, to some extent, to "render a reason for the hope that is in us." Faith must have *some* evidence to rest upon, though it may be extremely variable in degree. Faith is but a sort of "Interpreter's House," to which reason leads her pilgrims during their long journey. Have we, then, any solid grounds for our Christian belief in the living, super-personal, and eternal God? Mr. Matthew Arnold affirms that we have not. He says, "All we say is, that men do not know enough about the Eternal, not ourselves, that makes for

righteousness, to warrant their pronouncing this either a person or a thing. We say that no one has discovered the nature of God to be personal, or is entitled to assert that God has conscious intelligence" ("God and the Bible," page 13, Popular Edition). And again (page 50), Mr. Arnold says, "But he who pronounces that God must be either a person or a thing, and that God must be a person, because persons are superior to things, talks as idly as one who should insist that the law of gravitation must be either a person or a thing, and should lay down which of the two it must be."

No doubt it would be rash in the extreme to declare that God must be *merely* what we call a person; for He may very well be, as I have already suggested, both personal and something more. But that God must have personality and conscious intelligence, whatever else He may also have, is, in my judgment, plain enough. The effect cannot be superior to its own cause. The part cannot be greater than the whole. The author of the cosmos must be at least as great as the collective elements of it. As the Bible says, "God is greater than our hearts." If we may not call God personal, if that word is too suggestive of human limitations, we are quite willing to call Him super-personal; for we do really know that He cannot be infra-personal. The saying of Carlyle remains unshaken, "It is flatly

inconceivable that intellect and moral emotion should be put into us by an entity that has none of its own." This also was the faith of Emerson, who, in speaking of a future life, declares that it must be both up to the level of our highest faculties, and worthy to be given us by the Creator; calmly assuming, like the Bible, that we do know that "God is greater than our hearts," however little we may know of Him besides. Surely it would not be reasonable to think that God has poured *all* His riches into the finite creation, so that there is none left for Himself; that we are absolutely necessary to Him; that it is only in us that He attains consciousness. In that case, this vague, indeterminate, and highly dependent God would not "be greater than our hearts." This merely potential God might then be well described, in language taken from the Bible, as, "poor, yet making many rich." It is not thus that we conceive of the Creator. Far rather, we believe that our personality is but a dim adumbration, a fleeting shadow, a meagre outline of God's overflowing abundance of personal and super-personal life. God only has life and immortality in Himself.

What Mr. Matthew Arnold says about the law of gravitation is irrelevant; for the grounds on which we attribute personality to God are wholly lacking in the case of this law. We regard God's personality as real, because we believe it to be the source of ours;

but we do not trace our personality to the law of gravitation in any degree.

Ultimately our belief in God's conscious intelligence is founded on the conviction that our own highest faculties are the best representation which we can, at present, find of the divine nature, though they are confessedly a most inadequate representation. We can only argue from what we know. A purified, chastened, and upward-looking anthropomorphism is at least superior to a resolutely ignorant fetichism. Probably God is far more akin to us than He is to inanimate nature or impersonal forces. What is the very essence of idolatry but conceiving of the Creator in a lower way than is necessary to us? Of course we cannot transcend the limits of our own faculties. If anthropomorphism lurks in the idea that God hears and answers prayer, it also lurks in the idea that He does not answer prayer. If the one idea implies a quasi-human compassion, the other implies a quasi-human indifference. A kind of intellectual paralysis or Nirvana must be the inevitable result of consistent and thorough distrust of our highest faculties. Pyrrhonism is the goal and the grave of mere Agnosticism. And from the grave of Pyrrhonism *faith* rises again. Agnosticism is forbidden by Pyrrhonism to say, that it is true and certain that there is no truth, or certainty, or probability.

Taking, then, our highest faculties as provisional

guides, can we honestly say that they tell us anything about God? Is any one theory or belief concerning the divine nature more reasonable and probable than any other? I cannot admit that we are left in total darkness on this great subject. I think that there are indeed "secret things which belong unto the Lord"; but I believe that there are also things revealed to us and our children. An accommodated revelation, a provisional knowledge, is not the same thing as total ignorance; twilight is not utter darkness. Even the man in the Bible, who saw "men as trees walking," was not totally blind: he was beginning to see. Perhaps, our confused, incoherent, and baffling perception of the Infinite in this life is analogous to the condition of this man in the Gospel who was gradually learning to see. God "leads the blind by a way that they know not."

We ought always to remember that probability is the very guide of life. Our belief is the result of weighing conflicting difficulties. Reason follows the line of least resistance. In the highest matters demonstration confessedly cannot be had. Unsolved and besetting problems haunt every system, whether theological or anti-theological. This is inevitable. As Amiel justly observes in his interesting "Journal," "The Absolute in detail is absurd and contradictory." Parts of a whole, when taken by them-

selves, must appear more or less unmeaning and contradictory. The severed limbs of the symmetrical body of truth have then to a large extent lost their significance. We have, as it were, a few detached bits of a very complicated puzzle. Therefore, in the light of this fact we need not fear to admit with Amiel, that "all particular convictions, all definite principles, all clear-cut formulas and fixed ideas, are but prejudices, useful in practice, but still narrownesses of the mind." Or, as Dr. Martineau expresses the same abiding fact, "It is the essence and beginning of religion to feel that all our belief and speech respecting God is untrue, yet infinitely truer than any non-belief and silence." The very best of creeds are but temporary crutches of the spirit; and one of Mr. Matthew Arnold's greatest mistakes is that he thinks that we Christians regard our crutches as angels' wings, and want to take them to heaven with us. After all, it really is better to feed our souls on diluted or adulterated truths, rather than to starve them altogether out of an intellectual fastidiousness which demands absolute knowledge. If the goodly ship of wisdom, in which the soul journeyed, is dashed against the sharp rocks of doubt, and broken up, it is better, like St. Paul's shipwrecked companions, to save ourselves on "boards and broken pieces of the ship."

We should never forget that all Atheistic theories,

when closely examined, make huge demands on faith or credulity. If I could really believe that mind in us was ultimately derived from something devoid of mind, I could afterwards believe *anything*, even all the wonderful transformations and miracles contained in the "Arabian Nights." The inconceivable is not got rid of by turning our backs on God. Mr. Herbert Spencer's vast system, with all its vaunted coherence, rests ultimately either on God or on nothing at all. His great creative power, the Persistence of Force, is after all only a subordinate power with a delegated authority. It implies something behind it. It is only a reflection of the divine steadfastness of the far-off Creator. It is a sort of disembodied quality setting up as an entity. Nothing approaching to evidence has yet been given us as to the possibility of mind or soul being involved out of *mere* matter. Conjuring is not argument. Matter, with mind immanent in it, is essentially different from mere matter. All non-Theistic theories virtually imply miracles. The divine power, in which we Christians believe, is still needed and still operative in these systems ; only it is, as it were, broken up into fragments and no longer concentrated. Those who will not be Theists are compelled by reason to be Pantheists. In the vast surging ocean of speculative thought, whole Armadas of Atheism are rudely dashed against the old abiding rocks of the persistently inexplicable. And it is only

by availing themselves of the suppressed elements of Theism latent in their theories that these philosophers escape, as by some despised life-buoys.

I think that we Theists may fairly proclaim that our creed is essentially a reasonable one. We do but elicit or develop what is virtually contained in *all* rational or comprehensible theories of the universe, even in such as are nominally Atheistic. The "Unknown God" has an invisible altar even in the laboratories of non-religious science. "Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, Him declare we unto you." A cautious and reasonable Theism seems the best interpreter that we can get of the collective facts known to us concerning the universe in general and concerning man. Our present religious and philosophical synthesis is confessedly inadequate and provisional; but it is the best that we can as yet attain. At all events, it has one great merit, viz., that it does not ignore or turn away from any ascertained and important facts. It does not turn away from the Infinite, though powerless to explain it. It does not neglect the significance of conscience, or seek to explain it away. This broad and deep religion is as a veritable cave Adullam, to which are gathered "every one that is in distress, and every one that is discontented," every fragment of truth at present unduly ignored by science, in its wish to emphasize other truths, or to

build an entirely symmetrical temple of knowledge. Here are gathered the outcast forms of "unclothed" truths "wandering between two worlds," the world of established facts, and the ideal world of poetry and imagination, where dwell the seminal principles of a profounder faith and a loftier knowledge. Religion of the wiser sort alone gathers up the lessons of the past, and gazes onwards to the dimly gleaming phantom forms of undiscovered verities as yet inconceivable to us. Only by learning to receive and understand what was once incredible has our race progressed at all; and religion furnishes at least a manger for this miraculous or incredible to be born in, that it may afterwards go forth to convince and instruct the world.

Conscience, or our moral nature, supplements the inadequacy of the revelations of reason, and almost forces those who listen to it to be in some sense Theists. Goodness is even now to us, notwithstanding all our darkness, a living reality. Even now it is touched to such fine issues that we are constrained to believe in "One fairer than the children of men" who touches it. Why does the mystic beauty of the far-off Ideal so haunt our souls, if it is indeed a nonentity or an *ignis fatuus*, and not, as we believe it to be, a "shadow of good things to come"? What is the Ideal in us but the shadow of the Almighty passing by? Apart from Theism, how can we account

for our present divine discontent and our ineradicable yearnings for something higher and better? If we men are the culmination of the universe, why do we experience such strange and humiliating feelings of our own poverty and abortive insufficiency? Whence comes our instinct to *look up*, if there is indeed nothing in the universe to look up to? Why should other worlds intrude into this world? Why does the Infinite for ever blend itself with all our deepest thoughts and feelings? Why do the noblest souls so often feel

“ A presence that disturbs them with the joy
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things ” ?

In sober truth, Atheism is much too simple a solution of the abiding mysteries of the universe. It entirely ignores the very grandest things in the universe ; and it is not a solution of the problems at all, but only a declaration that there is no solution ; that the universe is, as it were, a series of boxes or caskets, with nothing at all in the last or inmost one, no secret treasures of wisdom and of purpose. Atheism is a kind of imbecility ; for it is the negation

of reason. So far from being a sort of coronation of our purely human reason, it is essentially a degradation and disparagement of it; for it declares that reason in man is a persistently fallacious guide, worse than no guide at all, to the meaning, or rather want of meaning, of the universe in general. On the Atheistic theory our reason perceives purpose in the world around us, when in fact there is no purpose. It causes us to take chaos for cosmos.

Nor do I believe that utter Agnosticism is our necessary portion either. Such Agnosticism would ultimately be the death of all that is loftiest in our nature. We might then indeed complain that we

“ Shut out
Daily to a more thin and outward rind,
Turn pale and starve.”

But, thank God, that is not our destiny. To us it is plain that the universe is essentially rational. “ The Lord sitteth above the water-flood ” of Nature’s competing possibilities; “ and the Lord remaineth a King for ever.” The kingdom of God is within us, provincialists though we are. In the “ many mansions ” of the mind and heart of God we believe that we shall eventually find the solution of all earth’s most baffling and saddening enigmas. And though throughout the long years of eternity we shall always, to some extent, have need of faith, though to us it

can never be given to explore the dread abysses of the Creator's being, yet that need cause us neither grief, nor alarm, nor doubt. Then some portion of our present faith will be turned into knowledge. We shall know beyond all shadow of doubt what on earth we Christians so firmly and so passionately believe, the great all-gladdening truth in which Christianity and reasonable Agnosticism meet together, the deathless conviction that this inscrutable universe is based alike on reason and on love, that "God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things," and willeth also the salvation of all men. This simple faith, born of reason and of conscience, is to us as a divine plank from the wreck of paradise, sent to bear us wanderers safely over all the dark, black waters of a menacing despair. Yes, assuredly we do know that the stream cannot rise higher than its source, that the Creator cannot be less than the created, that God is immeasurably greater than our weak, sin-stained, yet pitying and self-sacrificing human hearts.

Wise Christian Agnostics do not really wish to eliminate any valuable and operative element from the faith of devout and humble believers. Too great a zeal for pulling up the "tares" of intellectual misconceptions often leads cold-blooded philosophers to pull up also the "wheat," which is the best nourishment of a vigorous moral and spiritual life. It is not right that the simple-minded "weak brother" should

be made to starve or perish through our knowledge, or our fastidiousness. Speculative philosophers are much too apt to forget that *all* our ideas concerning God must, in this life, be more or less erroneous—those of metaphysicians, as well as those of simple Christians. We do not really escape error by wholly abjuring anthropomorphism. To conceive of God as a merely intellectual activity, as a collection of unearthly and empty categories, as a colossal syllogism, or even as an “*anima mundi*,” is by no means to arrive at pure and unadulterated truth concerning the divine nature. Our intellects, no less than our hearts, are at present hopelessly tinged with provincialism. One eminent writer—I believe it was the late Mr. Mark Pattison—declared that the idea of God has been “defecated to a pure transparency.” If this were really the case, the idea of God would cease to influence the mass of mankind entirely. I quite agree with Mr. Cotter Morison on this subject when he says, “No one wants, no one can care for, an abstract God, an Unknowable, an Absolute, with whom we stand in no human or intelligible relation.” Again, Mr. Morison says, “An anthropomorphic God is the only God whom men can worship.” This last sentence seems to me to contain a grave error. It is not true that, to be worshipped by us, God must be believed to be *entirely* like man. It is enough if we recognize the fact that God has in Him some qualities analogous

to those possessed by man, that God is genuinely superhuman, that He possesses, in unimaginable perfection, all our noblest virtues, *besides countless others* which have no reference to us.

Still, we must resist all endeavours to "defecate to a pure transparency" the old operative and influential idea of God. To the mass of mankind a "pure transparency" would be nothing better than a powerless Baal; there would be "no voice, nor any that answereth" in reply to our human supplications for aid. If the goodly ship of ancient Christian Theism is indeed now wrecked, and if its old "shipmen," its old navigating human thoughts and feelings, are about to leave it, or rather to be thrust out from it, we should perhaps do well to listen to the voice of practical wisdom saying to us, as Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." The belief that there is in God something quasi-human, the persuasion that God has a heart, though it be "greater than our hearts," is the very central idea and the very life-blood of all powerful and constraining religion. St. John set forth the whole *rationale* of practical religion and explained the unique moral power of Christian Theism, when he said, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." Who can count the number of wandering, sin-stained human hearts that have found peace and moral cleansing in that noble teaching?

God forbid that this grandest and most pathetic of all truths should be "defecated to a pure transparency."

Personally I do not sympathize in the least with those who wish for a merely intellectual God. In some respects I am a Christian Agnostic ; but I do firmly believe that in man the heart is greater than the head, and nearer far to God. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Heroism and love are to me far grander prophets of God than any forms of intellectual subtlety. I find God in sympathy and deep human fellowship, when I cannot find Him in syllogisms. These latter may speak to me of "an idea defecated to a pure transparency" ; but the former bring me near to strength and peace, to the "Eternal Father strong to save." Pathos, with its marred visage, haunts man's heart, though his head may reject it ; and pathos, like "the man of sorrows," is the best revealer of the Eternal. More and more am I struck with wonder at the glorious riches of the human heart and the strange poverty of the human intellect. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise." Every act of human heroism and sympathetic self-sacrifice seems to strengthen enormously my faith in God, my ineradicable conviction that "God is greater than our hearts."

Therefore, my philosophical Agnosticism, my sorrowful realization of the exceeding difficulty of forming any coherent idea of my infinite and incomprehensible

Creator, does not at all disqualify me for joining heartily in the deep human prayers of unlearned and unsophisticated hearts and souls. With them I can gladly worship the God "unseen, yet ever near." For in such worship I experience the highest elevation that my nature is capable of. In the realized sonship of man I find constraining evidence of the abiding fatherhood of God. I am thankful to join with the most ignorant hearts on earth in drawing nigh to the great Creator. For "God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." He knows that our errors in thinking of Him are unavoidable, that we scarcely can find any suitable words with which to address Him, that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought." St. Paul corrected himself as too rash and daring when he had said to his Galatian converts, "Ye have known God"; and he substituted the humbler words "or rather are known of God." And in this change of words we may find consolation. It is not necessary that we should in any adequate way know God on earth. Rather, we "are known of Him." Faith suffices for our most pressing necessities in this life. All real worshippers *believe* in God; and we also believe that He is present with us in our highest hours, though our intellects perceive Him not. "There standeth One among us, whom we know not." And so, reasonable and Christian Agnostics can join heart to heart in the very simplest and most unintel-

lectual kinds of genuine prayer and adoration. Only, when such "times of refreshing" are over, the simpler and perhaps more blessed believers must pardon us baffled and bewildered ones, if we are still heard to cry wistfully,

"O Christ, Whom now beneath a veil we see,
May what we thirst for soon our portion be,
To gaze on Thee unveiled, and see Thy face,
The vision of Thy glory and Thy grace." Amen.

HUMAN CORRUPTION AND ITS TREATMENT.

ROMANS vii., *verse* 18.

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

To the real and earnest student of man's complex nature, with its innate and ineradicable contradictions, there are few more interesting passages in religious literature than this seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which are so vividly depicted the bewilderment, weakness, and despair of the soul. St. Paul's intellect at this time was hopelessly perplexed and baffled by the strange contrariant phenomena of the inner life. He was, in truth,

“Wandering between two worlds—one dead,
The other powerless to be born.”

Behind him lay the old peaceful world of instinctive action which knew not the law; before him there gleamed fitfully, as through a thick mist, the far-off

land of spiritual freedom, in which the tables of the law were for ever superseded by the soul's own divine and spontaneous activity. Man's spiritual crutches were already becoming an incumbrance; and yet man knew not how to walk alone and unaided.

In this transition stage it was not clear in what way man's nature ought to be described. St. Paul could not say whether, in the deepest sense of the words, man was good or evil, whether he ought to be characterized in terms of the fair ideal which was then beginning to haunt his dreams, or in terms of the actual, which seemed to proclaim unmistakably his essential affinity with the brutes. St. Paul's insight was too keen and piercing, and his aspirations too fervent, for him to rest in the so-called evangelical doctrine of the total depravity of human nature. Amidst the direst failure he felt the stirrings of an immortal hope. The spirit lusted against the flesh as well as the flesh against the spirit. Even then, amidst the tumultuous rabble of contending instincts there stood One whom they knew not, "in form like unto the Son of God," One predestined to final victory, One who should eventually say to the insurgent waves of irrational passions, "Peace, be still."

And so St. Paul spoke from the very depths of his own personal experience when he said, "We are saved by hope." The ideal man was even then struggling to

be born. God had set eternity and infinity in man's heart. The sovereignty of the flesh was destined ere long to pass away. Even now its feasts began to be troubled by the mysterious hand of the divine Ideal writing its condemnation on the wall. Even from of old, gleams from the far-off infinite sea of light had begun to steal gradually into the dim caverns of man's pristine animality. The law, which Paul found so hateful in itself, was a shadow and a harbinger of the glories of genuine moral freedom. The time of man's subjection to law was, as it were, a period of spiritual moulting, in itself disfiguring and depressing, but leading on to grand results. The flesh fought the more fiercely because it began to know that its reign was well-nigh over, that it must ere long be incorporated into the great advancing empire of spiritual reason, in accordance with that all-pervading principle written on the very heart of the universe, "The elder shall serve the younger."

The flesh fought hard, because it knew not that it was destined in some wise to share in the glories of the spirit. The flesh knew not that it must die, in order that it might the more truly live, that it was by losing its life that it should eventually find it; that its present beauty was the frail seed of a loftier and imperishable splendour. Yet even then the flesh was being gradually spiritualized. Mystic dews from the far-off heavens were falling upon it. It was being

grafted into a transcendent humanity, so that it should eventually wonder at its own fruits, which yet were not its own. God is always working miracles ; He bringeth splendour out of foulness. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill." Out of animal instincts God distils sublime and imperishable human affections.

When St. Paul wrote the words of our text, he did not realize God's merciful purpose to redeem the flesh ; and hence he despaired of it, and would fain have given it a bill of divorcement, and put it away, just as some philosophers of the transcendental school have wished to ignore or banish matter in their explanations of the universe. In this hour of despairing perplexity, St. Paul desired to drive away the flesh as an outcast scapegoat, which might carry away into oblivion the necessitated sins of mind or spirit. Yet even then the wondrous transformation was being slowly accomplished ; matter was beginning to be etherealized into a majestic garment of the everlasting spirit. Spirit, like the great father in the parable, was on its way to meet that outcast prodigal, the flesh, which had hitherto wasted in riotous living the rich treasures which belonged to the soul.

And, in his brighter and happier moments, St. Paul had glimpses of this consolatory truth. At times he knew that the flesh and man's natural instincts were not destined to be finally accursed, or "cast as rubbish

to the void." He knew that their Redeemer lived, that deep human affection should transform, ennoble, and spiritualize the basis of man's nature, without destroying or annulling it. The perplexity portrayed in the seventh chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans is ere long swallowed up in the piercing insight and the triumphant assurance which pervade the eighth chapter of the same epistle. In that glorious song of triumph, St. Paul saw the far-off end of the whole sinning and travailing creation of God. To his sorrow-stained rapturous eyes the waters of Jordan seemed already past, the strife was already o'er and the victory won ; God had wiped away all tears from off all faces ; the leprosy of man had wholly past away ; " and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

In fact, St. Paul's peace of mind was gained by realizing to a considerable extent the progressive nature of man. This explained sin, as nothing else could explain it. God and the lower animals are alike stationary ; man is the pilgrim of the universe ; hence his incurable restlessness, hence his stumbling and falling, hence the mire which cleaves to him. St. Paul knew that the way of man was from Adam to Jesus, from the paradise of untroubled instincts, through the bleak wilderness of prolonged moral failure, on to the promised land of emancipated reason and conscious union with all things fair and

noble. Thus, in some dim way, the substance of the doctrine of evolution was faintly apprehended by St. Paul. It was as the angel which wrestled with Jacob ; it would not tell Paul its name ; yet it in some wise blessed, enlarged, and glorified his nature.

Hence St. Paul gazed on the whole human race with tenderest compassion and unfathomable hope. With shrunken thigh and eyes blasted by excess of light, this great pilgrim of eternity walked amongst his fellow-men, not as an unsympathetic alien, not as a preacher of eternal condemnation and misery, not as a disparager of natural kindness and natural nobleness, but rather as a deep-souled Son of Consolation, as the slave of the Everlasting Compassion, as the friend of publicans and sinners, as the unfailing advocate of the outcast and the lost, as one who had seen death and hell swallowed up in the sacred abysses of God's infinite goodness ; as one who knew in whom he had believed, as one who had explored with eager gladness the divine heart of the great Son of Man, and so knew well how that self-sacrificing heart would thirst once more with the old thirst of Calvary, when he, Paul the aged, should stand at length before the Creator's awful throne, and turning himself away from the happy, should gaze in sorrow on the wounded and the sin-stained, and cry aloud once more concerning these, his unhappy brethren, "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" "I could wish

that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren."

St. Paul, like Jesus Himself, was full of excuses for the wanderings, the defects, and the infirmities of men. He never dreamt of teaching the hopeless and degrading doctrine of the total depravity of human nature, a doctrine utterly repugnant to the very genius of his Master's religion. Nor was he in favour of a premature classification of different specimens of humanity. He realized the essentially progressive nature of man's heart and soul. He knew that the subjection of the creature to vanity and error, and sin, was but one stage of its necessary development. He clearly recognized the fact that the natural is the basis or the germ of the spiritual, and not its cancelling or negation. He knew that in the spiritual world the child is father to the man. And so he could genuinely appreciate all forms of goodness, even though they should as yet appear to have nothing religious about them. His keen sympathetic eyes discerned the "soul of goodness in things evil." He heard nature crying aloud to spirit to "come over and help it."

The theology which seeks to draw a broad line of demarcation between the spiritual and the unspiritual, the theology which dares to teach that there is more difference between these two classes of humanity than there is between a tree or a plant which has life and

a stone or a crystal which has not life, was certainly not learnt either from Jesus or St. Paul, though it claims to be pre-eminently Scriptural. This harsh thrusting away of germinal and undeveloped souls is utterly alien from the real spirit of Christianity. Far rather, did our Lord claim as essentially His own all who were anywise capable of any form of nobleness. Beneath the outer crust of evil habits Jesus was ever looking to the inner heart of goodness and of loyalty. And so, whilst Calvinistic divines are content to read the Commination Service over defective natures, Christ finds a far better and deeper explanation of human errors and wanderings in those old words of compassionate and comprehending love, "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak."

And in the very temper of his divine Master, St. Paul, as he gazed on unspiritual characters, with their strange mingling of glory and blindness, of heroism and of sin, uttered no hopeless words of despair or condemnation, but solaced the yearnings of his sacred grief by murmuring to himself those wise old words of penetrating interpretation and onward-looking hopefulness, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual." "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

It is surprising and discouraging to find that in our own day many thoughtful and religious minds are

unable to accept St. Paul's triumphant optimism as to the final destiny of man. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." In words such as these the deepest religious genius, which never is or can be Arminian, expresses its invincible persuasion that a day will come when all evil shall be subdued, and "God shall be all in all." Yet many thoughtful Christians, hampered by a kind of Arminian Deism, apparently think that God's merciful purpose will in some cases be thwarted by the perverse power of the human will.

Now I think that this view is plainly foolish and unfounded. God has not, like Frankenstein, created a monster in the form of a human will, which shall for ever haunt the divine wisdom and reproach its powerlessness. Man cannot escape from the omnipresent energies of the Creator. The Most High bestows on none of His creatures a delegated and yet separate omnipotence. Far rather, "in Him we live, move, and have our being." Modern science helps us here. For it, day by day, proclaims with ever-growing emphasis the inconceivable vastness and range of the creative power and the extreme insignificance of man; and so it helps to banish this strange phantom of an eternally defiant human will. Shall an ant-heap wage

permanent war against the collective armies of the world? We must also bear in mind that sinners are not usually characterized by any immense energy of volition. So far as we know, sin is usually akin to folly and weakness. The serpent "beguiles" men, and so they act disobediently. In a combat between soundness and rottenness the issue is not doubtful.

But some say that God *will not* interfere, though He easily *could*, with this obstinate human energy bent on defiant wickedness. Now, I think that this argument is refuted by experience and analogy, as well as by *a priori* considerations. As a matter of fact, evil is even now being slowly invaded and crushed before our eyes. Those who will not believe in goodness are not able to exalt themselves. If, then, so far as we know, the divine power now wages war against evil throughout the universe, why should we believe that it will by-and-by cease to do so? God "fainteth not, neither is weary." The belief that God will shrink from any process necessary to overcome the foolish obstinacy of His creatures, is not really a cautious and sober-minded and Christian belief, though it usually passes for such. In reality, this unbelieving belief is but a poor futile ghost of the old inoperative Deistic creed, which ignored the immanence of God in man, which represented God's connection with the creation as precarious and not essential, which imagined that He made the universe

as a man might make a machine, and then looked on with placid indifference, and "saw it go."

Again, the way in which we are permitted to a very large extent to shape and mould the wills of our neighbours, and sometimes even to invade and almost transform their very personality, seems to indicate that God has no very jealous regard for the barren autonomy and infertile self-sufficiency of each separate will. Which of us would scruple to cast devils out of our neighbour's heart, even though he might greatly love these devils? Now, here on earth, spiritual magnetism is an indisputable reality. Why, then, should it cease in another life?

I may also remark that the objection to the belief that God will hereafter by His wise discipline overcome all human sinfulness, is very inconsistent with faith in the real and prodigious efficacy of vicarious suffering. The doctrine of vicarious suffering is quite incompatible with the belief in the lonely autonomy and sterile self-sufficiency of each separate will. Many who could not save themselves are saved by others. The very essence of human nature is social. A being absolutely cut off from the influence of his fellows would ere long cease to be human. Then why preserve throughout eternity this ghastly futile skeleton of humanity, this petrified memorial of the abortiveness of the creation?

To those of us who believe in the genuine reality of

the divine *love* it is, of course, wholly impossible to imagine the eternal Father ceasing to do all that He can to lift His creatures out of the mire of evil. To us the splendid moral victories, and the strangely aggressive and penetrating power, of love and sympathy on earth are prophecies of still grander and more miraculous triumphs hereafter. We cannot alter the old pathetic teaching about the shepherd seeking diligently for the one wandering sheep. We cannot erase from our Bibles or from our hearts the old hopeful words about the lost sheep, "*until he find it.*" We cannot write instead the mournful words of conscious weakness and futility, until he recognizes the fact that he *cannot* find it.

All this is not merely theoretical teaching. This more hopeful and more intelligent view of human nature and human destiny must of necessity vastly influence our practical dealings with our fellow-men. The new, and more reasonable, theology is as beneficial to man's soul as the new and more reasonable views of physiology and medicine are to his body. In past ages thousands of souls as well as bodies have been bled to death, or hopelessly weakened by drastic medicines not really needful or in any way suitable. Our aim now is not to get rid of force, or fire, or energy of character, but rather to preserve them and direct them wisely. The aim of the old harsher religion was to tame mankind, to make men harmless

and docile, even though they should at the same time be rendered dull, spiritless, and unaspiring. The old semi-Deistic orthodoxy knew not what to make of that strange saying of Christ's religion, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; and the violent (or fervent) take it by force." A deeper insight into human nature has revealed to us the fact that, just as dirt is but matter in the wrong place, so sinfulness is very often only energy in the wrong place, energy unwisely directed.

No one in this age, who has ever entered into the hearts of his fellow-men, can doubt the great moral and educational superiority of the milder and more hopeful and more reasonable teaching concerning human nature and destiny. Force or mere repression is no real or adequate remedy for sinfulness. Was any man in these days ever made really better by the Communion Service? When Jesus, the true Orpheus of the spiritual world, is melting and transforming the very hearts of his brethren, we no longer wish to hear the harsh discordant croakings of the old ravens of Judaism. Christ never says that any one is cursed. In His eyes man, with all his faults, is by no means like the sordid Caliban, "whom stripes may move, not kindness."

That the true moral power of religion is not in coercion, but in persuasion, we know by genuine practical experience. Day by day we find that

sympathy is more potent than denunciation. Denounce sinners, and they will be repelled, and will hate you ; interpret sinners to themselves, and they will often follow you. The weapons of truly successful spiritual warfare are not "carnal" ; the blows of reason are mightier than the blows of anger. Now, as in the days of old, entire reasonableness, piercing insight, and boundless good will, steal away the hearts of the sons of men, as Absalom once stole the hearts of the people of Israel. Deep for ever cries unto deep. The sin-stained profundity of erring natures recognizes its spiritual kinship with the profundity of saints. The wild tenderness of Robert Burns was not really far from the saintly tenderness of the poet Cowper. Religious teaching that is based on a really penetrating interpretation of the heart of man needs no priestly paraphernalia of authority and no confirmatory thunderings of the law. Redeemed outcasts are its forerunners and its heralds. The sinful woman of Samaria cries aloud to the perplexed, the erring, and the lost, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did : is not this the Christ ?"

We ought not to be always reminding men of their sins ; for thus we discourage them. We ought often to remind men of the good that is in them, of their real capacities for nobleness and heroism, even as St. Paul said to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in

thee." We ought to remind men that they are born for greater things than to be the slaves of their senses or their own lower nature. We ought to proclaim the glorious truth that there is no real ground for hopeless despair ; that God still besets all His creatures behind and before ; that in the deepest sense of the words God is *for* us, not against us, for the very worst and weakest of His creatures, working patiently for their ultimate redemption.

Thus shall we best minister to the deep moral and spiritual necessities of our brethren, by sympathetic interpretation, and not by harsh denunciation ; not by saying to men that they are worms abhorred by God, but rather by laying our hands with compassion on their wounds and their diseases, and saying to each individual soul, "Thou ailest here or there." Thus also shall we the ministers of compassion ourselves find great and real rewards. Even now on earth we shall "live in hearts made better by our presence." Then the estrangement of sinners from us will pass away, and be replaced by confidence. Then, when our reproaches to sinners shall be as the faithful wounding of friends, we shall sometimes almost see with our own eyes the passing away of evil, and the gradual dawning of a higher life. Then the faces of our friendly sinners will mirror to us the inner working of their hearts, and through deep, sorrowing, earth-stained human eyes the struggling soul shall look out

upon us and say, as we urge it on to holiness, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

And so, by digging deep down into human nature, we shall find a well of refreshment *for ourselves*. For to some of us the most discouraging feature of humanity is its terrible superficiality or paltriness. This links men with mice or flies, and makes immortality almost incredible. But a real vision of the depths or heights of humanity alters our view. The bleak, infertile mountains of man's nature, haunted by storms, and scarred by indelible records of the Lord's controversy, have a revealing splendour of their own, not found in the miasmatic marshes of the stagnant commonplace. Even in the depths of hell we may sometimes find God. In the sublime grandeur of elemental moral strife we may find an unfailing evidence of man's lofty origin and mysterious destiny. In the language of an ancient prophet, our hearts "fear, and are enlarged." We thank God for the vision of His glory passing by. With awe-struck spirits we exclaim concerning the great upheavals of the moral world, "The springs of waters were seen, and the foundations of the round world were discovered, at Thy chiding, O Lord, at the blasting of the breath of Thy displeasure." And thus we ever pray—O kindly, yet terrific Light! Lead Thou us on! Lead Thou us on!

THE REVERSAL OF ORDINARY JUDGMENTS.

LUKE xiii., *verse* 30.

“And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.”

PROBABLY all thoughtful and religious people have often been disgusted at the readiness of the unthinking to pass judgment on their fellow-men, and to assign them their due praise or blame. And thoughtful spirits have longed for real justice, and have consoled themselves by thinking of that great reversal of human judgments which assuredly awaits us, when we shall stand before the judgment-seat of the All-seeing and All-just. In order to bring home forcibly to our minds the full conviction that God will judge His creatures hereafter far differently from the way in which we commonly judge them now, it may be well for us to consider a few plain facts bearing on the case, facts which make it quite inevitable that God should set aside our hasty and ill-considered verdicts concerning good and bad people.

1. We forget that the sources or roots of holiness and of sin are often the same in great measure. Vices are often virtues run to seed. Prudence in its old age often turns into miserliness. Virtues, by their exuberant and luxuriant growth, often dig their own graves. "Be not righteous over-much : why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" seems often a very needful warning. And it very commonly happens that decayed virtues appear worse than born vices. "*Corruptio optimi est pessimum.*" For instance, scarcely any misanthropy is in a way so savage as that of disappointed faith in mankind. If we begin by believing our fellow-men to be angels, we shall very likely end in considering them devils. And a man whose own nature is noble and benevolent does very commonly start with far too high an idea of human nature. And then, finding other men vastly inferior to himself morally, he can scarcely help disliking them. And thus virtue digs its own grave; thus benevolence leads to passionate misanthropy. And then common-place people very complacently condemn the misanthrope, though radically his character is far higher than theirs,

"Can these dry bones live?" asks respectable spiritual mediocrity. Can this misanthrope be in any way a Christian? Is he not "dead in trespasses and sins"? Yes, these dry bones shall one day live. Benevolence, though stifled here, shall one day

flourish ; and many a so-called misanthrope shall be called forth from his present grave of despair, and shall be welcomed as a friend and fellow-worker by Jesus Christ. For a great deal of what is *called* misanthropy is only suppressed benevolence—as it were the saddened heart of nobleness as it walks through the “valley of the shadow of death,” the heart of pity and compassion looking for judgment on the earth, and hearing only a cry of misery and oppression ; looking for justice, and hearing only the cry of the wronged and the down-trodden. Pessimism and its consequent bitterness of spirit is often only a sort of prolonged *moulting* of the angels’ wings of sympathy and helpfulness, though Dives, who looks on life as a very excellent feast, plumes himself on his freedom from this divine sorrow, and calls it rank unbelief. Misanthropy, if it be chiefly discontent with the actual condition of men, and hopeless yearning for their improvement, is not altogether far from the kingdom of God. As it surveys the meanness and the paltriness of mankind, it may well exclaim, in the language of Jesus, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken us?”

In general it is perfectly plain that the sources of sanctity and sinfulness are often in great measure the same. This is the grain of truth in the common saying, “The greater the sinner, the greater the saint.” Force of character tells in *either* direction. Sinfulness

is often only force run off the lines, as it were. A very vivid nature is the source of both good and evil. Depth of feeling gives a man a great tendency to go wrong in this bewildering world, and also a great recuperative power when he has gone wrong. The sinful woman, whom our Lord forgave, was no doubt capable of much wickedness from which the Pharisee was safe; and yet she had it in her to reach a height of holiness quite inaccessible to the Pharisee. And so, for the sake of this struggling, this nascent holiness, our Saviour pronounced her forgiveness, "For she loved much." The fire of a deep attachment to a nature higher than our own is the most effectual means in the world for burning up the chaff and the weeds of evil habits. Hence coldness of nature and incapacity for affection are often far more fatal than vicious habits.

For the same reason, no doubt, our Lord forgave St. Peter so readily his denial of his Master and his Friend, "for he loved much." That bitter grief of St. Peter, as he scorned himself, was the quick repentance of a passionate nature, accomplishing in a few moments what it would take colder natures years to perform. God ever sees the end in the beginning. In the misdirected persecuting zeal of Saul of Tarsus God saw the germs of that heroic and sublime devotion to religion, which in after years made Paul the very chiefest of the apostles. In the eager,

hot-blooded vehemence and the passionate restlessness of the young and sinful Augustine, God saw the glorious rude materials and the faint adumbration of that illustrious sanctity and that unfathomable devotion which should one day be the splendour and the light of the Christian Church. That fiery heart, which at one time made Augustine sin so eagerly, afterwards caused him to love the all-pure and all-blessed Creator as few others of the sons of men have loved Him. That very keenness of intellect, which led him to heresy, afterwards led him to truth.

And here, by the way, we see one immense objection to the old theory that all who die in sin are for ever lost beyond redemption. At that rate, many of the grandest and noblest natures would be among the lost. For they are often the slowest in developing; they have in them so much to develop. The seed that sprang up quickly soon withered away, *because the soil had no depth*. The same cause made it spring up quickly, and also wither away quickly. Most things worth having are of slow growth. God's majestic slowness in developing the material world makes it seem very unlikely that He will assign to souls such a wretchedly short and inadequate period in which to develop the good that is in them. Surely to the more complex being He will allow the longer time.

If we accept the doctrine of evolution, our argument

is still further strengthened. If, even with divine unseen assistance, it took many thousands of years for our race to become men instead of beasts, then surely it is likely that God will allow each of us more than the short term of seventy years in which to become a *good* man. Why should we suppose that God took such an enormous time to lay the *foundations* of our human nature, and then allowed such an extremely short time for building on them the sublime cathedral of exalted holiness?

At the final judgment we can well understand that there must be a great reversal of ordinary human judgments. God will look to the roots of character in us; and we shall then see that the foundations of heroic virtues have been laid in many a forlorn soul which we thought overpowered and slain by evil in this life. And perhaps they will rank higher in the celestial kingdom, who have thus in grief and shame laid the foundations of a glorious temple of God, than those who have, with but little trouble, built for God a poor, common, little meeting-house of decent respectability. "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first." Perhaps the truest of the elect may be saved the last in point of time, the last to leave the wrecked ship of a storm-beaten humanity. Perhaps those who are "scarcely saved," who "suffer loss," who are "saved, yet so as by fire," may be far nearer to Christ than more prudent religionists.

Perhaps some of the very grandest of the elect, as they enter the eternal kingdom, may hear the voices of the angels saying of them with admiration, and not with scorn, "They saved others ; themselves they could not save." Perhaps that loving benevolence whose wings are smirched by clay gathered whilst lifting sinners out of the mire, may be more valued by the great heart of the Son of Man than the bright, shining, spotless robes of those less venturesome spirits, who have trodden steadily the road to heaven, and shunned all contact with the wounds of sinners.

(2) Further, we must remember that some sins which from an external point of view seem equally great, are in reality very different in their importance and significance. Of some sins we may say that they express the real and true nature of the man committing them. He is, as it were, "*totus in illis*," wrapped up in them. They are the outcome of his truest and most permanent self ; whereas, in other cases, like that of David, sins often seem quite transient phenomena, as it were *eclipses* of a man's real nature, hardly so much a man's own doing as that of some alien or hostile spirit which has seized him ; instances of demoniacal possession, and not of natural or innate wickedness. Such assuredly was the sin of the minister, Arthur Dimmesdale, in Hawthorne's "*Scarlet Letter*."

Such sinful actions form an exception to the general rule ; they do not help to form a persistent habit of sin-

ing. On the contrary, they are like the exacerbations and paroxysms which often precede recovery in the case of bodily maladies; they are the work of the evil spirit tearing the soul with especial fury, just before it is cast out. Thus it sometimes happens that a man's whole after life is the better for a fall, which has shown him the hatefulness of sin, and also his own weakness.

(3) Again, sins which admit of high aspirations are in reality far less dangerous than less gross Pharisaic sins, which are not clearly recognized as sins, and which in consequence do not seem to call for repentance. And yet, in our ordinary judgments we think that respectability covers a multitude of sins; we prefer the Pharisee to the publican. Practically, we judge that a man may be a Christian, though very uncharitable, greedy, and grasping, very Pharisaic, very unaspiring in religion, very satisfied with his own spiritual condition; and, practically, we most of us judge that a man liable to sudden outbursts of evil, followed by the keenest repentance, is a scandal to the Christian church, an outcast from the fold of Christ. The Christian church has never yet realized the truth that selfishness is the most intractable of moral evils. But our Lord's judgment was very different. In His eyes, open sinfulness, that knew itself to be sinfulness and longed for something better, was far less terrible and dangerous than a less startling form of evil, taking itself for good, and so guaranteed against repentance.

Pharisaic sins are the most fatal sins. Open and gross sins are, as it were, a transitory fever of the heart; Pharisaism is the ossification of the heart. Gross sins, by their very grossness, often suggest repentance; Pharisaism is dangerously near that one only hopeless state in which good is taken for evil and evil for good. "If the LIGHT that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Publicans and harlots are more likely to repent and change than those Pharisees whose sins are so intensely respectable that they seem almost virtues. Baptized or consecrated selfishness is the greatest hindrance to true goodness.

(4) Again, in trying to forecast the future judgment of God, we must take account of the terrible mystery of *inherited* evil tendencies—tendencies which are often much increased by bad education. There is often a good deal of cruelty and harshness in our judgment of sinners. Physicians know how grievously hampered and almost annihilated free-will is in some unfortunate beings, who are yet perfectly sane in the ordinary sense of the word. Bad temper, sensuality, a tendency to drunkenness, are just as much hereditary, in a great many cases, as gout or insanity are.

No one would voluntarily choose to be born deformed in soul, any more than to be born deformed in body. And we ought most certainly to feel the deepest compassion for people cursed with an unfortunate

organization. Many people are born blind spiritually, because their parents have sinned. Just as Nature often produces bodily abortions, so no doubt does it often produce spiritual abortions. There are myriads of hapless souls which never have any real probation at all in this life. An unfortunate organization, aggravated by a bad education, has handed them over to evil.

And sometimes there are cases of this sort so sad that they might make the angels weep—cases in which some *one* radical defect of organization has marred a rare combination of the noblest gifts. There are men thoroughly good and admirable in every respect except *one*. It seems as if they had been made for the loftiest holiness; only some spiteful fairy, as it were, has marred and spoilt the original work of the Creator. There are souls that could quite easily tell their Creator *how* to make them free and holy. If *one* fatal element in their nature were removed, they would be saints. In the eyes of the All-just such souls are about the most pitiable objects in the universe, though we commonly condemn them. We forget that Jesus had a tender word of sympathy, not only for saints, but also for aspiring, devil-haunted sinners; we forget that the Divine Master not only said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," but also said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

We ought to remember how very fine the line often is between sanity and insanity. In many men of the noblest genius and the loftiest aspirations there are often manifold traces of a sort of insanity. No one can really decide how far any other man is responsible. Hence the utter folly of judging our neighbours. The moral judgments of commonplace people are *almost always* wrong.

At the last day God will judge all His creatures with absolute fairness, because with absolute comprehension. God will judge us *according to our opportunities* ; and therefore "many that are first shall be last, and the last first." Then the great question will be if we have honestly struggled against evil, and *not* to what extent we have been successful.

I doubt not that it will eventually be found that our ordinary judgments of many sinners were far too harsh. I doubt not that many whom we account sinners will hereafter be numbered amongst the real elect. From east and west and from north and south will come a forlorn band of sin-stained pilgrims, "clothed in filthy garments, and with Satan standing at their right hand," and these the Father will receive, it may be to their own exceeding amazement. For they all had the root of the matter in them ; they all struggled against evil. Therefore, then their strife will be o'er, their battle won ; the All-merciful will cleanse and heal them. "Many that are first shall

be last, and the last first." A few good and noble actions forced out of a reluctant and rebellious nature, from love for God or love for God's creatures, are perhaps more really meritorious than a whole life of easy goodness and almost mechanical obedience. It is probable that, in the spiritual world, self-satisfied self-sufficiency is much further from God than the scarred, sinful, yearning heart of ever-baffled aspiration.

(5) Lastly, in the case of the more strictly religious virtues our judgments are often glaringly false—*e.g.*, concerning reverence and the merits of faith. Much that passes for reverence is merely irreligious indifference. Men do not wish to be troubled by religion in their daily life, so they erect for it a shrine far remote from all the feelings and actions of ordinary life. And this *banishment* of their Creator they call reverence for Him. To talk of God as if He were an unmeaning abstraction is often considered reverent; to talk of God as if He were our Father, our Guide, and our unfailing Friend, is often considered irreverent. Moreover, some men are so entirely reverent in heart, so utterly filled with an abiding sense of the reality of religion, that they are comparatively careless of their manner. Pierced through and through by a sense of God's presence, it never strikes such men that they need *prove* their reverence. And so reverence itself sometimes causes apparent irreverence. Probably Elijah would be reproved for irreverence if he were

to worship in a ritualistic church ; for the true altar of the Eternal was deep down in the prophet's awe-struck heart, and he would probably care but little for any external altar.

Again, we err greatly in our ordinary judgments of doubters in religion. Doubt is often a really hopeful sign, just as pain of body is often a sign that paralysis is passing away. None doubt deeply except those who are really interested in religion. Dives has no doubts ; and he thinks St. Thomas a very wicked person. In truth, doubt is often as that angel that troubled the waters of old, so that they might become a source of healing to the crippled and diseased. Doubt is often but as the putting away of childish things, preparatory to the reception of the deeper things of manhood. Doubt, if only it be sincere, spiritual, and upward-looking, is often only a sort of "valley of the shadow of death," through which true pilgrims pass ere they enter the land of Beulah.

Doubt is often only a sort of moulting in the spiritual world, the moulting of the soaring eagle wings of faith. Hence it often has a very real value. And it is indeed sickening to hear Dives thanking God that he is not St. Thomas, that his shallow soul knows not the divine pangs of the orphan spirit seeking for the eternal Father. The unutterable sorrows and hideous cruelties which pervade the world often render it immensely difficult for sensitive and benevolent

hearts to believe in the divine government of the world ; but Dives, not caring one straw for the sufferings of Lazarus, finds it easy to believe.

Deep souls are often pierced with doubt and sadness at God's apparent absence from His own creation. But Dives knows nothing of this divine thirst of the soul—God is quite as much present to him as he wishes ; and therefore Dives sees nothing strange, bewildering, or perplexing in the state of the world. And so he is quite ready to anathematize the doubter. He condemns us for not chanting a *Te Deum* for the world's riches, when perhaps our whole souls are absorbed in that sorrowful aspiration of despairing love, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him !"

There are two sorts of doubters described in the Bible ; doubters of the one sort say unto God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways" ; doubters of the other sort bemoan themselves in the language of bewildered Job, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him !" Now I think we may rest assured that God will discriminate the one set of doubters from the other. And we ought, so far as we can, to anticipate God's just judgment. "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed ? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied ?"

MAN'S ABIDING NEED OF RELIGION.


I KINGS xviii., *verse 24.*

“And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord : and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.”

IN our age there is one great and most important controversy, in comparison with which all others shrink into insignificance. What think you of religion? is the question by which we may now discriminate different minds and souls from each other in the depths of their being. This great question is at the basis of innumerable subordinate problems which men are ever discussing. A man's attitude towards religion really affects and colours his views of art, music, poetry, philosophy, friendship, practical life, social questions, and politics. Religion, like a sword, has pierced many souls, so that “the thoughts of many hearts are revealed.” Tell me what a man's inmost feelings towards this great mystery are, and I can guess a good deal as to what his views on other

subjects must be. The negation of religion puts a mark on every human faculty. Materialism inevitably lowers the whole tone of the mind, and, as it were, puts the "mark of the beast" on all man's noblest capacities. Irreligion will not be confined to purely abstract or theological subjects; it pervades and desiccates all that is most profoundly human and aspiring in us. Consequently, to have no interest in religion is to have a very deficient interest in our race, its welfare, and its highest life.

In past ages the authority and abiding sway of our spiritual instincts in some form were practically taken for granted. But now men are in the greatest doubt concerning the claim of these instincts to supremacy. Is religion a permanent necessity of man's nature, or is it a merely temporary help, with which men are fast learning to dispense? Can we have an elevated and widely operative moralizing agency from which all distinctively religious elements shall have been eliminated? Granting that "in the capacity of sacrifice regardless of self we have the purest essence of the best religion," can this "spirit of sacrifice, evolved in the theological stage, be severed from and independent of its parent"? Will Nature force morality upon us, as Professor Huxley thinks it will, when God is supposed no longer to exist? Was Clifford right in thinking that man created religion? or would it be more true to say that religion to a great extent created or developed man?



Would man be his own veritable self, if we eliminated from him every element which consciously or unconsciously craves communion with an unseen and higher world? Is spirituality a passing phase of our nature, the naive freshness of reason in its infancy, or is it our nature's highest outcome and unfading crown of glory? Is the Infinite a chimæra, or the very ground of all reality, the source of all true knowledge and true life, the fountain of intellectual and moral order, without which this world would be a huge and formless chaos of contradictions, a veritable Bedlam, without purpose and without meaning? If there is no God, would it still be necessary to invent one, to give order, harmony, and coherence to our own interior life? Is "the kingdom of God" indeed within us in such a very real and intimate way, that it is only by regarding ourselves as its subjects that we can attain either a rational view of external nature, or of our own mental and moral constitution?

In one respect I think that the position of religion is less assailed than it was in other ages; we are not now afflicted with treatises attacking it as an *invention* and a product of fraud and priestly love of domination. Our opponents in this age perceive clearly enough that religion is far too large a thing to have grown out of any pretender's fertile brain, that it may at least fairly claim to have certain innate affinities

and greatest of the prophets. It reminds one of the old prophet of Bethel, who said that he had received a later revelation cancelling the earlier one given to the prophet whom he deceived. The lives of many opponents of Theism in these days are admirable and noble. The Christianity imbibed in their earlier years still lives in their hearts. The sun of the intellectual and spiritual world no longer illumines the old mountain peaks of loftiest speculation and grandest spirituality ; but its rays seem to pour themselves all the more freely over the lower portions of the mountain, the realm of practical morality ; so that this now seems a far more impressive and important spectacle than the old Alpine heights shrouded in their impenetrable gloom. Morality supersedes mystery. It is as if, by killing the superhuman "heir" of eternity, his inheritance had become ours, so that we can use it for the practical purposes of ordinary life.

But the real question is, how long this apparent independence and even enhanced vitality of morality are likely to continue. Is religion, in fact, eliminated entirely from morality as yet, or does it still live and work in it? I suppose that all careful observers would confess that a very large element of religion still lingers in the hearts of most of those who professedly reject it ; and consequently that it is impossible to judge at all accurately as to the moral results of complete irreligion, until several generations of Atheism

have eliminated all latent influences of the old Theistic belief. We are now living, to a great extent, in a kind of brilliant afterglow of Christianity; and it is not altogether unnatural that some should be enraptured with its marvellously ethereal and mystic beauty, and imagine that it will continue. As I have suggested before, we have at present even a kind of brilliant exaggeration of some of the deep moral truths of religion. In George Eliot's writings, for instance, Duty assumes, for the time, an even greater and more striking prominence from the absence of God and Immortality. The old, far-off divine element in the universe, which communed with men occasionally, has now, in the judgment of many, become definitely incarnate in Duty; so that it seems to some as if the "half-Gods" had gone, and the real Gods arrived. Disinterestedness now at length seems really possible, when the old heaven is gone. This noble virtue, as many think, can now at last shine forth in all its sublime grandeur. Goodness has become more truly ethereal by getting rid of religion. The goodness of the religious man was but a sort of coarsened virtue; it was tainted with the spirit of bargaining; it did not really teach men that they must lose their life in order to find it. But now, as many non-religious people think, the old scaffolding of theological ideas has vanished, and the inner shrine of imperishable moral glory gleams upon us in all its brightness.

Religion nursed and trained the incipient instinct of self-sacrifice, which is the very soul of all human goodness; but now it can stand alone, and would fain go forth to achieve vaster conquests.

At present the opponents of Theism do not exactly wish to dispense with religion altogether; their desire is to find a permanent substitute, which may itself become a sort of religion, though utterly devoid of the old Theistic beliefs. They perceive that the higher moral instincts of humanity still need to be nourished, stimulated, organized, and wisely directed. Many of the methods of the old religion are still valued highly, though its object of worship is set aside. Positivism still clings to some of the Christian methods. It would fain preserve the continuity of piety. To one who inspects it closely there plainly appears in it much of the ancient religion. It is, in some respects, a sort of disembodied and ghost-like Catholicism. It still speaks of a future life; but that life is only a pale simulacrum or shadow of the Christian heaven. We are offered indeed a sort of sublimation of the loftiest Christian feelings; the noblest moral elevation and the most ethereal unselfishness shall be ours; only, we shall not be in the least conscious of our condition and our perfections. The future rewards of this religion will seem, to ordinary men, a sort of Barmecide's feast, strangely resembling, and yet essentially different from, the real nourishment of the soul in earlier days.

In this aspect Comtism is really pathetic, and even in some ways admirable. It is as a Christianity which has lost its Lord, but still goes on dreaming of Him. It has abandoned all hope of future union with the Infinite Pity ; yet, by means of profound benevolence, Positivism is in some ways near to it. It is as if, in the long slumber of abiding death, the soul should occasionally be visited by glorious dreams, and should find consolation in these, and should cry feebly and with stifled voice to the Eternal Benignity,

“ Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.”

Futile though we firmly believe this religion to be, we cannot call it ignoble or essentially anti-Christian ; for we know its wide-hearted human compassion towards man ; and we remember also the verdict of our great Leader when He said, “ Forasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” One cannot help thinking that the grandchildren of the best of our present Positivists will either have returned to the old faith of Theism, or else will have become the most resolute of Pessimists. For such religionists are now living on their spiritual capital ; they have found no safe investment for their inherited spiritual wealth. Starvation may ultimately drive them back to God.

The fantastic religion of Mr. Matthew Arnold, un-

influential though I suppose it is, also bears witness to the fact that man genuinely needs something to look up to, and something to inspire and guide him. This is indeed a wonderfully strange religion. We do not here find even so much as "the idea of God defecated to a pure transparency." Nor is our attention exclusively directed to man, as in the Comtist creed. Through hatred of metaphysics, Mr. Arnold has himself provided us with a highly metaphysical religion. "The not ourselves that makes for righteousness" is fully as difficult to conceive as any of the Christian mysteries. It wholly refuses to tell us its name, or explain to us its nature. Nor is it in the least clear how this august entity is related to "the not ourselves that makes for" *un*righteousness, which is manifestly an existing reality. Certainly the genuine existence of this latter potentate is quite as much revealed as that of the former; and, apart from a kind of elementary Theism, I do not see on what grounds we can refuse to pay it a kind of homage. For it may eventually turn out to be the stronger power of the two, as Pessimism thinks that it now actually is. Moreover, as we are strictly forbidden to ascribe to this power anything approaching to personality or conscious will, one scarcely sees why it should care how we behave; and, as we do not know at all adequately what its ends or aims may be, we can hardly be blamed if we happen to thwart

them. Then, again, one is inclined to ask, *Can* one really thwart the aims of this occult power? Is not the thought of opposition to it, or co-operation with it, merely a remnant—on Mr. Arnold's own principles—of the old anthropomorphic religion? So that altogether, this substitute for God, offered us as a great boon on the ground of its existence being verifiable, turns out to be merely a ghost of the old metaphysics, which has assumed a fashionable scientific garb, and obtained an entrance into the regions of the verifiable by false pretences.

Mr. Matthew Arnold's whole theory on this subject is singularly fantastic. How are we to know what *is* righteousness in the judgment of the presiding powers of the universe, if we are to cast out all traces of anthropomorphism from our minds? I cannot use faculties which I do not possess; and very likely my bungling attempts to co-operate may do more mischief than my total idleness. At all events, this "not ourselves that makes for righteousness" will ever seem to the mass of mankind a sort of quantity that may be neglected, a hypothetical or ghost-like guide speaking in an unknown tongue. There is certainly nothing imperious or constraining about it; and I do not imagine that any strong nature, with hungry appetites and vehement desires, was ever yet restrained from gratifying them by this spectral moralist which is supposed to haunt the universe. I am afraid that a

very large portion of the human race will take courage to come to the conclusion that, in fearing this hypothetical entity, they were being frightened by their own shadows ; and will determine that man himself is the culmination of the moral universe, and owes respect to no one and nothing but himself.

The theory of Professor Huxley seems a much more plausible one, viz., that Nature does and will force morality upon us, whether we like or not, quite independently of religion and metaphysics ; that, just as Nature sends physical disease and pestilence to avenge transgression of physical laws, so she sends ample moral penalties, in the form of social disintegration and ruin, to avenge moral transgressions. One rather wishes that this was indeed the case always and altogether. But, if it were so, one hardly sees why men should be so bad as they actually are. Nature, if it were really bent on making men moral, would certainly be a very powerful and omnipresent instructor, ruling us with a rod of iron, speaking authoritatively and imperiously, in a way very different indeed from the gentle, placid, and mildly suggestive murmurings of Mr. Arnold's "stream of tendency making for righteousness," as it goes meekly meandering through human life. And I think that Mr. Huxley is quite right to a certain extent. As Bishop Butler judged, there is certainly such a thing as a constitution of man as man, and a life corresponding to it. To a

very great extent it is perfectly true that our own internal and external structure, and that of the world in which we dwell, necessarily determine the sort of life which we are to lead. If the human race lived like tigers, it would ere long come to an end. The Stoical formula, live according to Nature, is very far indeed from being an unmeaning one. Plato fully agreed with Mr. Huxley in thinking that some measure of goodness is necessary for the continued existence of a society or a state. He considered that evil is essentially a dividing and disintegrating force, whereas good binds men together and cements the most useful partnerships and alliances. It is plainly the interest of collective humanity to repress the more brutal elements lurking in it, and to promote goodness to a very great extent. So much is clear enough.

But we must remember that the morality of Nature does not exactly coincide with that of the loftiest and most spiritual of human beings; also that, though there is an ideal constitution of man, the vast majority of the human race inevitably falls very far short of it, so that what is true enough of the ideal man is not true of most individuals. These differ so greatly that we say that what is one man's meat is another man's poison. Though we believe that man as man was made for virtue, yet it cannot reasonably be denied that vice in some of its varied forms is more attractive to the majority of our race.

The morality of Nature is certainly in many ways very defective. Nature's darlings are not saints. As Emerson remarks, "Nature comes to us eating and drinking and sinning." Chastity, for instance, is evidently an artificial virtue, and may almost be said to be contrary to Nature. Moreover, compassion, at least in that high degree in which it now exists, is not only not thrust upon us by Nature, but is in many respects quite opposed to her intentions. Compassion, when full of tenderness for the weak, is essentially opposed to the whole *rationale* of evolution; it preserves those whom Nature would fain eradicate. In fact, taken as a whole, moral and spiritual progress is to a great extent only possible by "forgetting the things that are behind," by unlearning the wisdom acquired by our ancestors during long ages of gradual development. Nature, looking to the physical welfare of our race, often counsels one course; and morality, illuminated by religion, often takes a quite opposite course. It makes an immense and permanent difference in our judgments as to right and wrong, and expedient or inexpedient, whether we regard our race simply as the culmination of animal perfection, or as the lowest and most inchoate form of spiritual beings destined to an immortal life of unending progress. Here religion and mere Nature inevitably come into collision; so that, if religion were wholly destroyed, it seems clear enough that mankind would henceforth

move in a very different direction morally. If we entirely discarded all belief in a future life, it might even come to pass that some sins might occasionally be deemed highly expedient, that the vices of individuals might sometimes be valued by Nature, as a sort of spiritual manure for the fertilizing of the soil of collective humanity. And I may add, that Nature's moralization of individuals, as conceived by Mr. Huxley, would in the vast majority of instances be very defective. The sense of sin, as of something hateful in itself, would vanish. Expediency would supplant duty. *To be found out* would be the thing to be most carefully avoided.

Utilitarianism can scarcely be regarded as an adequate substitute for religion, for very many reasons. In its higher forms this creed *presupposes* a high degree of goodness which it is quite powerless to *create*. It presupposes a real and operative desire for the common welfare; and where this is lacking, Utilitarianism of the more elevated sort is obviously powerless. Nor can this philosophy in its lower forms do the work of religion. If it seeks to show that it is for the interest of each individual to be virtuous, that honesty is the best policy for each separate person always, its teaching is confronted by a flat denial, supported by a long and varied experience of life. From the days of the Psalmist till now our race has been presented with the puzzling spectacle of the

wicked flourishing and the righteous suffering. Regard for our own interest does not suggest any high degree of steadfast virtue to the general run of mankind. To make the *minimum* of moral exertion secure to us the maximum of the approval of our fellows, to get the better of other men, to outwit them by a wise craftiness, is the course suggested by ordinary self-love. "Be not righteous over-much; why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" To act the part of Ananias and Sapphira, *without being found out*, would seem to many men the height of practical wisdom. To give to our fellow-men a portion of what they might fairly claim from us, and to succeed in representing this portion as the whole, would be the course sanctioned by self-interest. One cannot get genuine morality out of the lower forms of Utilitarianism. One cannot get benevolence out of selfishness. It is not true that pleasure and enjoyment, in their grosser and more universally attractive forms, are best secured by self-sacrifice and devotion to others.

The higher form of Utilitarianism is in many ways noble enough, but it is weak and inoperative as regards the mass of mankind, when not strengthened by religion. I entirely believe that some elements of Theism, vague and dim though that religion may be, are ever at the basis of all really influential forms of self-sacrificing sympathy and true altruism. The

saying, "Each man for himself, and God for us all," seems to me, full of untrue and misleading suggestions. On the contrary, I believe the fact is that the persuasion that God is "for us all" is the real ground and reason why it is not necessary that each man should be "for himself," or work exclusively for his own interests. Underlying all forms of self-sacrifice even the most extreme and utterly altruistic, is, I believe, a vague idea or a half-conscious belief that the universe is fundamentally sound and reasonable, based on the firm adamant of indestructible wisdom and equity, so that justice shall ultimately be done to all, so that goodness shall never be finally confounded, but shall emerge victorious from that last dire conflagration, when heaven and earth shall pass away.

Here assuredly are the elements of genuine Theism, even in hearts that are not conscious of their existence. The doctrine of immortality ever lurks in heroism, though it may be in so subtle a form as to baffle the keenest analysis. God is supporting the moral world, though it seems to float independently in empty space. He is "found of those who sought Him not." He is often not to be discerned on the *surface* of the higher Utilitarianism, but he is ever at its root or basis. Apart from a real, though it may be latent and only half conscious, belief in a rational order binding the whole universe together, despair would consume

the heart of reflecting sympathy. And this rational order is but an aspect of that unseen, creative, and sustaining Mind which we call God. Half-stifled faith in the guardianship of the divine wisdom is, I believe, the sustaining force of the noble moral efforts of many a so-called Atheist. The longing for the God who *ought* to exist makes such a spirit deny the God that *men say* exists. The Ideal is sometimes not dead in the Atheist's soul, but only sleepeth ; it is, as it were, unclothed, and waiting to be re-incarnate in some grander shape. When belief in a concentrated God has vanished, there still very often remains belief in a kind of diffused God. Pantheism is ever ready to soar aloft triumphant from the ashes of Theism. And genuine Pantheism in its higher forms is very far different from Atheism. A God wandering through immensity is better far than no God. Spinozism is but religion dreaming. Divine reason, even though entranced and dreaming, affords some ground for hopefulness as to the future. Pantheism is but Theism reduced to potentiality ; and in that august and awful potentiality there is hope for our race, as there once was in the slumbering babe in the lowly manger at Bethlehem.

No reasonable person would wish in any way to underrate the beauty of the higher and more spiritual Utilitarianism with its lofty altruistic ethics. And I think that sober-minded Christians may well regard it

as a friend from whom they may learn much. This Utilitarianism has helped us greatly by exposing the futility and folly of mere asceticism. And so far is it from being opposed to the nature of our religion, that I think we might truly say that it has come to add brightness, joy, and deeper meaning to the imperfectly understood teaching of Jesus our Master. To the old selfish, unaspiring, and semi-Deistic Christianity this wise philosophy might well exclaim, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Yes, it is the very light of deepest Christianity itself, which has come to us in the modern teaching of self-sacrifice. In the present teaching of altruism we do but hear the voice of Jesus Himself speaking to us of those "many things" which in earlier days He "had to say" to His disciples, but which they "could not bear" then.

But, taken as a complete and exclusive guide, and as a guide for ordinary men, the nobler form of Utilitarianism is necessarily weak. It presupposes, as I have said before, the sowing of the good seed of influential religion. To preach this philosophy to the wicked and the selfish would be much like offering counsels of perfection to habitual criminals. A very large portion of the human race feels under no sort of obligation to promote the general welfare, though it would confess that it is wrong to steal or murder. Thus, as regards bad or hopelessly dull people, the

loftier Utilitarianism must inevitably seem to make the foundation of morals far less firm than the edifice raised upon it. Save in a very few exceptionally noble natures, a real and constraining wish to promote the general welfare is the *result* of prolonged moral training, and so cannot be made the starting point, or the initial stage, for the bad in their pilgrimage from animal selfishness to the broadest sympathy.

After all, there is much truth in the philosophy of Hartley. We must begin working upon natural selfishness, and be content to transmute it very gradually into disinterestedness. And for this process of transformation, religion in some form appears absolutely indispensable. I am confirmed in this opinion by the very frank confession of a recent opponent of our religion—Mr. Cotter Morison—who says, "Nothing is gained by disguising the fact that there is no remedy for a bad heart." Apart from some species of religion, I also genuinely believe that there is no remedy for a bad heart. It is of no use to offer men food, if they are totally devoid of appetite and the power of digestion. It is vain to offer the law as an object of worship, or as a deliverer, to habitual law-breakers. Motives are not things that we can first manufacture and then thrust into the hearts of others; we can greatly strengthen them sometimes by wise moral advice, but only on the condition that they exist germinally already.

Philosophy in general is essentially unsuited for the curing of the moral diseases of ordinary men. It is too abstract and remote from the affections which are the true springs of action. Hearts are not really moved by subtleties or by syllogisms. I think that Comte was quite right in his opinion that abstract studies, unless carefully counteracted by other interests, tend to produce great aridity of the emotional nature; and it is by our hearts that we chiefly move our fellow-men. Modern philosophy is no more effective as a moral agent than ancient philosophy was; and of that Coleridge remarked, "Across the night of paganism philosophy flitted like the lantern-fly of the tropics, a light to itself, and an ornament to the surrounding darkness; but, alas! little more than an ornament." We need warmth to foster life; and this we can never get from the frigid regions of critical analysis. Life can only come from life. To seek salvation from analytical psychology is to seek the living amongst the dead. Moreover, philosophy has little or nothing to say with regard to sin and its attendant dissatisfaction; and this, by whatever name we may call it, is an abiding and tragical fact of our existence. In fact, philosophy is dumb just at that point where we most crave for an enlightening answer.

In recent days few have perceived this so clearly as the bewildered and baffled soul of Amiel. In

his "Journal" he says, "Now, all that science gives is the '*amor intellectualis*' of Spinoza, light without warmth, a resignation which is contemplative and grandiose, but inhuman, because it is scarcely transmissible, and remains a privilege, one of the rarest of all. Moral love places the centre of the individual in the centre of being. It has at least salvation in principle, the germ of eternal life. To love is virtually to know; to know is not virtually to love; there you have the relation of these two modes of man. The redemption wrought by science or by intellectual love is, then, inferior to the redemption wrought by will or by moral love." Amiel also remarks, "Philosophy, then, to return to the subject, can never replace religion; revolutionaries are not apostles, although the apostles may have been revolutionaries. To save from the outside to the inside—and by the outside I understand also the intelligence relatively to the will—is an error and a danger. The negative part of the humanist's work is good; it will strip Christianity of an outer shell which is become superfluous; but Ruge and Feuerbach cannot save humanity. She must have her saints and her heroes, to complete the work of her philosophers. Science is the power of man, and love his strength; man *becomes* man only by the intelligence; but he *is* man only by the heart."

I think that our ordinary experience of life con-

firm the verdict of this profound, dispassionate, and lonely seeker after truth and moral power. Religion really has an influence over man which nothing else has. In it are stored certain miraculous moral forces to be found nowhere else. It is the home of enthusiasm, that great power of God. It alone has the capacity of giving life to the morally dead. The influence of religion is a sort of mysterious intrusion of the living amongst the dead, the intrusion of a higher order of existence, with all its marvellous energies, into a lower order. It is the Infinite "troubling" the stagnant finite waters of earthly morality, till they become miraculous to heal. It is in some ways akin to the mightier incalculable forces of Nature, as compared to our puny activities. Our moral weakness seems to call for the aid of some divine power. Enthusiasm is the very breath of religion streaming down to us from higher worlds; and without this enthusiasm profound moral transformations are impossible. There is something almost repulsively mechanical in all, or almost all, merely earthly systems of morality. We "see an end" of all such merely mundane goodness; and it does not fire our hearts. There is something unattractive and unnatural in the man made good by science or philosophy, or by soulless and irreligious religion. There is no poetry, nothing soaring, no glory as of the Infinite, in such a man's morality. As such

a moralist goes about doing good in a half-hearted kind of way, our ears ever seem to hear the clanking and whirring of moral machinery. The heart seems to have died out of him, and to have been replaced by a cunningly devised mechanism. Scientific or philosophical education has desiccated the heart of all its old spontaneity. The soul seems to have been turned into a sort of mill entirely occupied in grinding external inducements into available motives. It often appears as if the more moral a man became, the more uninteresting he became also.

And in the vast majority of cases, mere science or philosophy fails to make men good at all, even in this strictly limited way. It fails to inspire men with sufficiently vivid or constraining motives. Sometimes the fuel of apparently adequate motives seems to be present ; but this fuel will not ignite. A kind of fatal languor spoils everything. Reason cannot do the work of inspired emotion ; mere instruction is not enough. Philosophy is unable to remove indifference, or to overcome the moral and spiritual torpor of the great mass of mankind. It is obliged to steal fire from religion, or at least from its outlying province, poetry, if it would redeem outcasts.

Moreover, by discrediting the divine pretensions of conscience, science deprives morality of its most powerful support and its most persistent and operative

stimulus or incentive. Professor Huxley's substitute is not an adequate one. For he practically gives us an external, remote, and occasional guide, instead of an internal one always present with us. Conscience, quickened by the old faith in its divine origin, is always with us, and persistently refuses to keep silence at our command, whereas the pressure of public opinion can be, to a great extent, evaded; and the vengeance of Nature comes home to moral transgressors only on rare occasions. Moral legislation or education enforced or authorized by earthquakes and pestilences, must always be precarious and defective for many reasons, and chiefly because the earthquakes and pestilences usually come upon the descendants of the sinners, and not upon the actual culprits. A man may always argue that he himself will, by the exercise of a little prudence, enjoy the pleasures of sin, and bequeath its penalties to his descendants. Nature does not strike speedily enough or with sufficient regularity to be an adequate moral teacher, when taken alone. Hence, to a great extent, arose the disposition to believe in rewards and punishments in another world. This belief at least testifies to the fact that sentence is not executed speedily on sinners by natural law, that morality is *not* adequately enforced in this life. Probably Nature has so many other things to do, that it has no time to turn pedagogue to us remote provincialists of the universe. Even in the judgment of

devout Theists, the moral government of the universe is only incipient here on earth.

It is very difficult to believe that conscience will retain anything like its old power, if deprived *entirely* of the prestige of its supposed divine origin. Conscience is now thought by many to be merely a record of the capitalized experience of utility gathered by our race in past ages. It now passes for divine, merely because its animal origin is forgotten. But in future, if Atheism should prevail, it will always be possible for the individual man to question the claims of our present moral sense ; and when thoroughly examined, its right to dictate must be repudiated. In the nature of things there is no reason why our ancestors should govern us. We set aside their opinions in other matters ; then why not their opinions about conscience ? The lofty imperiousness of the viceroy will not be tolerated, when once the king whom he represents has been dethroned and banished. The peculiarity of conscience has hitherto been that it has been regarded as essentially a voice from a higher world, a representative of supra-mundane wisdom and power ; consequently its unique significance must go, when men no longer believe in any being higher than themselves. Vice and virtue must henceforth be regarded as involving only a question of taste.

Even now I think we may discern in several direc-

tions a marked tendency to question the peremptory and exclusive demands of virtuousness. In international affairs there is now much less talk of right, and more of might, than there used to be. The word perfidy, as applied to nations, is somewhat old fashioned, not because treachery has ceased, but because fairness is not now expected. A wise regard for its own real interest is now almost all that is expected from one nation in its dealings with others. The King of kings, to whom nations formerly appealed to defend their rights, has practically vanished. Æstheticism is also in some respects a revolt against the exclusiveness of the old morality ; its high priest is taste, not conscience. And the "fleshly school" in modern literature is confessedly in open rebellion against what it considers the inordinate claims of Christian purity.

Nor can we fairly say that the modern revolt against the severer ethics of past ages is entirely unwarranted by the supposed facts and consequent inferences of modern non-Theistic science, though many scientific men who are devoid of religious faith yet lead noble lives. Atheistic science and philosophy preach, Necessitarianism ; and this doctrine is absolutely fatal to the vigour of our moral sense in the long run. Conscience is found to testify falsely ; it blames me for what I cannot help. Strictly speaking, Necessitarian moralists are scarcely entitled to use

the word "ought" at all. We do not say that a tree *ought* to grow.

I think also that we may expect that Necessitarianism and the depression or weakening of conscience will act and react on each other. The spiritual and philosophical doctrine of a real, though limited, freedom of the will is likely to seem less and less credible, as the phenomena of the moral world grow less and less striking, as conscience grows less imperious and gradually lays aside its claims to a unique mission, content henceforth to be reckoned as one amongst many guiding influences of our race. If Necessitarian Atheism should prevail, moral agony would in course of time cease to exist; and this moral agony is the fiery prophet and stern revealer of freedom. So that a time would eventually come when the claims of Necessitarian philosophy would meet with no protest from any part of our nature.

But I think that the greatest and most far-reaching injury of all those which would come upon our highest life from the prevalence of irreligion would be this, viz., that it would fill all the deepest human hearts with a profound and incurable depression. It is manifest from his writings that John Stuart Mill genuinely felt this at various stages of his life. The diluted but very real religion of Wordsworth's poetry delivered him from his early spiritual sickness and torpor, which was in truth nothing but a longing for

the Infinite, though he knew it not. Practically the cry of his dissatisfied mind then was, "I see an end of all perfection." The idea that the number of possible musical combinations might one day be exhausted, caused Mill keen pain for several days. And still keener and more prolonged grief came to him when he realized the fact that, if all his projects were carried out, he would still be far from happiness. And much later on in life, when writing the last of his essays on religion, he expresses his sense of the great value of the belief in a future life, "the loftier aspirations being no longer in the same degree checked and kept down by a sense of the insignificance of human life, by the disastrous feeling of not worth while."

In Professor Seeley's interesting book, "Natural Religion," we find the same almost involuntary confession that Theism is a moral necessity for the highest development and welfare of man on earth. Having throughout the whole previous portion of the book laboured to prove that we may have an operative and influential religion without faith in a personal God and a future life, at the end of the book our author turns round, and practically contradicts nearly all that he has previously said. He admits that the inherent irony of life would petrify us; that practical energy in moral matters would die out of us, when we realized that "all that is enduring in the universe is cold and dead," and that the others, for whom we

would work, are as insignificant as the self from which we have ceased to hope anything. And perhaps the most tragical element in that long unrest and inward dissonance depicted in "Amiel's Journal," was the terrible and abiding discrepancy between his heart and his intellect, the latter for ever snatching away the bread of life from the former—so that Amiel became a sort of embodied discord, an incarnate vacillation, a bundle of struggling antinomies, a subjective nobleness discarded by objective reality, and floating vaguely through empty space as a starved and homeless outcast. Over the grave of that heroic failure we might well write the true motto of all ardent and baffled Idealists, "Here we have no continuing city; but we seek one to come." His whole being was a prophecy of immortality. The other world, with its vast conceptions and inconceivable glories, utterly spoilt this world for him. Jacob's ladder made all earthly knowledge seem poor and low. He was unceasingly tantalized. The kingdom of eternity was within him, and yet he could not understand it. The finger of God wrote sublime words on the walls of his soul, and yet Amiel could find no adequate interpretation of their mystic wisdom. Spiritually, he was suspended between earth and heaven—in fact a citizen of neither. He was prematurely "unclothed," before the "celestial body" was prepared for him. He had cast aside

provisional ideas, and had not yet received eternal and absolute ideas. To him seem marvellously applicable the words of Emerson, in his "Threnody":

"Perchance not he but Nature ailed,
The world and not the infant failed.
It was not ripe yet to sustain
A genius of so fine a strain,
Who gazed upon the sun and moon
As if he came into his own,
And, pregnant with his grander thought,
Brought the old order into doubt.
His beauty once their beauty tried ;
They could not feed him, so he died,
And wandered backward as in scorn,
To wait an æon to be born."

Men often fancy that they can do without religion, because they are not aware how like religion is to heaven, how it has diffused itself through all the most profoundly interesting elements of life, so that hardly anything that we value would remain the same, if religion were entirely eliminated from our hearts and minds. Men often talk as if they thought that the instinct of worship is the only part of our nature that would be vitally injured by the prevalence of Atheism. And, no doubt, that glorious instinct would be hopelessly starved, till at length it died out or invented a new God. The tendency in us to look up, to revere unreservedly, and to adore, is indeed the very crowning glory of our nature. This is truly at once the most elevated and the most impersonal

and least provincial element of our complex being. When open-eyed reason bows low before the glory of the Infinite, and exclaims, with entranced humility, "My Lord, and my God," then is the truest epiphany of immortality; then are we most really "made partakers of the Divine nature." Then, from the far-off heavens, we sometimes seem to hear an unearthly voice proclaiming the essential and abiding grandeur of worship, cancelling our provincialism, and saying of poor, wandering, outcast man, "This is My beloved son." Peter's trance, with its Divine vision, came to him whilst he was praying. It may be that those creatures of more ethereal mould, that stand in the splendour of God's nearer presence, sometimes wonder at the Creator's love for beings so lowly as man; and perhaps the mystery is explained to them, as the deep prayers of our race rise up to heaven, and God sends man help, as He sent Ananias to beseeching Saul of Tarsus, "for he prayeth." Prayer, in its higher forms, seems to me a sort of cancelling of man's lowly pristine animality, and an initiation into the boundless kingdom of the super-sensible and the spiritual.

The thick mists of darkness would indeed close around us if our instinct of worship was eradicated. We should no longer be able in any sense to say, "Our citizenship is in the heavens." But we should suffer injury from the departure of religion in very

many other ways. A kind of general depression, would lower the whole tone of our higher life, when no longer revived by the unfailing springs of diviner worlds pouring down into it. Over all our noblest aspirations a blighting irony would then write this discouraging decree, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Philosophy, art, music, poetry, friendship, benevolence, charity, and self-sacrifice would all suffer grievous things. The Ideal, which is the very soul of all these, would pine and die. We could not live on emotions that we *knew* to be merely subjective illusions. Developed reason cannot be fed on fairy tales. We cannot go back to our nurseries, and be happy. The very strength of the Ideal is the persuasion that it is more real than the earthly real, that it is a veritable reflection of the uncreated beauty and the everlasting wisdom, a "pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty," well entitled and well able to vindicate its own intrinsic supremacy, and, speaking from the dread mystic depths of the Unfathomable Mind, to declare, Before the actual was I AM. Whether men realize it or not, the fact is that all our hopes are bound up with belief in some kind of Theism. Sorrow and disgust and hopeless despair would be the portion of all deep and reflective souls, unless they believed that the universe is the dwelling-place of supreme Mind; that in it is gradually unfolded the "increasing purpose" of reason and of goodness;

that in some poor inadequate way we are allowed to co-operate with this increasing purpose ; that we shall not be put to permanent mental or moral confusion ; that cosmos will in the end replace chaos ; that an inconceivable order "sitteth above the water-floods" of competing irrationalities ; and that in the final result the "judge of all the earth will do right," and the whole universe resound with the celestial harmonies of victorious intellect and unfathomable love. God has set in man's heart a persistent optimism, in order to guard him from the despairing madness which might well arise from a merely passive contemplation of the ways of Nature.

Let us look at some of the ways in which our highest interests and joys would suffer from the total loss of religion. It is plain that philosophy would lose its very soul in losing faith in the rational government of the universe. Who would care to construct a philosophy of the finite and the perishable? The grandeur and the coherence of speculative thought would indeed be gone, if there were no dread mysterious First Cause, no great I AM, at the root of things. Atheism, if its significance were thoroughly realized, would involve the paralysis of our loftiest powers of thinking. All our deepest intellectual research is based on the belief that the very core of the universe is conscious mind. Even science itself, in its confident expectation of finding law everywhere,

implies faith in a rational government of all things ; it implies also a belief that reason in us and reason diffused throughout the universe are essentially the same. The interpreter must have something fundamental in common with that which he interprets. It is only by rallying on a sort of vague and undeveloped Theism that science can escape defeat by Pyrrhonism or absolute scepticism.

Art also would probably suffer much if religion was entirely abandoned. Religion gives to art the inspiration of a superhuman ideal ; it always opens a way of escape from the ordinary and the commonplace. Imagination feeds on heroic and divine legends : its very life-blood is the faith that man is genuinely related to all that is vast and fair, to those hidden and supersensible glories which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." The Ideal is the very home of art ; and the victories of art are essentially a transcending of the actual. Music in particular is penetrated by religion ; it is filled with the superhuman, the mysterious, the Infinite, and the Eternal. Music is a sort of Jacob's ladder connecting earth and heaven ; by it the finite and the Infinite hold communion ; it is the nearest possible approach to the one language of the immortals ; it is a kind of vague Theophany, a sort of transient glimpse of paradise with its purely spiritual glories. Vainly would an Atheist seek to evoke from music its noblest and most piercing

utterances. Even now the world's most glorious music is pervaded by a certain lofty melancholy, as of a soul sorrowfully seeking for the lost Ideal. What, then, would happen, if this most ethereal and heavenly art were carried away captive into the Babylon of the finite, the earthly, and the commonplace? If there is no God and no grander life for man hereafter, music is essentially a deceiver or an illusion. For it emphasizes and enhances just those aspirations in us which can never be satisfied. It vivifies in us just those feelings to which there are no corresponding realities. In its very nature the highest music is either a prophet or a tantalizing illusion. Its promises are not fulfilled here. And so Jean Paul Richter said to it, "Away, away, for thou speakest to me of things which in all my endless life I never have found, nor shall find."

Poetry, like music, would quite obviously suffer immensely, if religion vanished. Music is but poetry dreaming—poetry emancipated from all fetters of the finite, and wandering vaguely through the vast realms of immensity and eternity. Poetry is as music *come to itself*, rallying from its divine trance, and vainly endeavouring to portray those sacred and awful things "which it is not possible for a man to utter." The very root or spring of poetry is an abiding discontent with the actual, and a quenchless longing for the Ideal. Hence, anything that discourages this

longing must inevitably depress poetry. Hence the blight on George Eliot's poetical writings. Revolt against what is thought to be religion may inspire a great poem, as it inspired Lucretius and Shelley; but acquiescence in the vanishing of religion is fatally depressing to poets. Gods are needed, if only in order to be defied. The Sublime may live in apparent antagonism to the Infinite; but it cannot live in the absence of the Infinite. It is humiliating to think that we men are so low as to be viewed by God with displeasure; but it is more humiliating and very far more depressing to think that the presiding power of the universe, whatever that may be, in no way takes notice of us, or condescends to consider our wants. Poetry must invent a God, if none really exists.

I think that very few realize the extent to which that great solace of human life—deep friendship—would be impoverished and weakened, if faith in God and a future life vanished altogether. A future life seems to me to lurk, as a kind of implicit assurance, in all the most profound human affections. Without this vague assurance, the chilling irony of life would, in very many cases, be fatal to the highest friendships. We might then well say that he who increased affection "increased sorrow also." To many of the very grandest souls of all it might then seem wiser to avoid joys predestined to end in hopelessness.

grief. Besides this, I think that a certain tender gravity must depart out of some of the very highest friendships, if Atheism prevailed. Our friends would not then seem to us so great; their welfare and their destinies would not seem so important as they now seem. Nor would our joy in their incipient goodness and nobleness fill our hearts with satisfaction, as it now does. Spiritual natures now often love their friends, not so much for what they actually are, as for what they *have it in them to become*. And despair might well destroy such love, if we believed that incipient nobleness was destined, ere long, to the charnel-house. It seems to me that it is impossible to bestow our very highest regard, and our very deepest affection, on anything that we thoroughly believe to be perishable. Finite things must be loved in a finite way. We could scarcely love animals as we can love souls. The deeps of infinity in one soul call to corresponding deeps in another. The most genuine union of hearts appears to me only possible where there is an underlying faith in eternity to cement it. God is ever present at the real marriages of souls. I wish, in these high matters, most carefully to avoid all prejudice. But I must confess that I believe that I have noticed in some of the Positivists a kind of incapacity for the higher and more imaginative friendship, which I could only ascribe to the depressing and withering influence of

the negative part of their creed. A kind of contempt for limitations, a sort of struggling infinity, seems to me to lurk unseen in man's grandest feelings.

Lastly, I cannot see how Christian charity and self-sacrifice can be wholly detached from Theistic belief, and yet flourish as of old. Without God and without a future life, the importance of our fellow-men would be greatly diminished. Man regarded as the culmination of animal perfection is one thing ; man regarded as the son of God, destined to a future life of perfect holiness, is quite another thing. For the latter one would dare and endure very far more than for the former. Moreover, our noble instinct of self-sacrifice would, I believe, pine and grow weak from want of sanction and encouragement in a resolutely Atheistic world. Our present self-sacrifice thinks that it has the author of the world to support it. From afar it ever hears the noblest elements of the universe approving of its unwearied activities and saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." But in an Atheistic world man's subjective nobleness would meet with no response in any permanent objective reality. All that is enduring in the universe would be cold and dead. So that despair would ultimately consume the heart of sympathy ; and it would seem an act of inhuman folly to do anything to prevent the whole family of man from finding

that "consummation devoutly to be wished," the long unbroken slumber of everlasting repose in death.

Therefore let us hold fast our faith in God. We need not fight about the words in which to describe Him ; but let us tenaciously retain the inner kernel of Theism, an unwavering confidence in "a holy will which is at the root of Nature and destiny." Thus only can our whole being expand duly here on earth ; thus only can we be our own veritable selves ; thus only can human nobleness be touched to the very finest issues. "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." The practical argument for religion is, in my judgment, quite irresistibly cogent. No doubt, our faith is beset by intellectual difficulties ; but the creed of Atheism is beset by equal or far greater difficulties. Perfect mental satisfaction cannot be had here on earth by any deep and speculative intellects ; "Now we see through a glass, darkly." Still, our reason certainly *suggests* to us the creed of Theism ; and then our emotional and moral faculties do in many ways verify it by genuine experience of its wisdom as an interpreter and its power as a redeemer. Religion has real and permanent affinity with all that is greatest in our nature. It explains us to ourselves and "tells us all that ever we did." So that when Atheistic science comes to the very humblest and least learned believer, and says to him,

"Give evolution the praise ; religion is a deceiver and a sinner," the ignorant, but faithful and observant soul may well reply, " Whether it be a sinner or no, I know not ; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

“IF A MAN DIE, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?”

JOB xiv., *part of verse 14.*

“If a man die, shall he live again?”

OUR age is, I believe, far more perplexed and saddened by this problem than is commonly supposed. Faith in a life beyond the grave is the real, though often unrecognized, basis of all stable peace and happiness for us. Without this underlying belief our present existence can have no real coherence, purpose, or meaning. We may often for a time almost forget or ignore this far-reaching trust; but we need to rally on it as a stronghold in seasons of defeat and depression. It is to us like the love of a father or mother to some dissipated and wandering prodigal, a love of which he may think lightly for a time, but on which he confidently expects to lean in the hour of direst peril and emergency. It is as the home to which the sick and wounded come back, that they may die in it. It is as an inexhaustible potentiality of wealth, on which we may draw when we have con-

sumed all the riches of the actual. Faith in a future life is the unseen foundation of all that is fairest and noblest in humanity. We may forget, or even despise, the foundation, in our keen admiration of the flowers and fruits ; but still it remains an indispensable necessity.

Even the joy and careless vivacity of the unreflecting seem to me to be ultimately based on the rational and thoughtful faith of deeper souls. Here again crops up the old pervading mystery of vicarious suffering. Beneath the superficial happiness of trivial natures lies stratum after stratum of profound human thought, extending far down towards the very core of the universe. Only over the solid underlying faith of thinkers can be found the soil in which light-hearted joyousness can live and thrive for any length of time. Volcanoes make short work of the frail beauty of luxuriant flowers and shrubs. Ordinary mundane happiness really depends on convictions which its owners do not themselves gain, or even hold consciously. Hence the abiding sadness and despair of the thoughtful cannot, in the long run, be without great effect even on the frivolous. Whilst King Belshazzar and his companions feast freely and "praise the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone, in the same hour come forth fingers of a man's hand," and write warning messages of impending woe. Even so, I think, it is

now. The deeper spirits of our race are often in gravest bewilderment and grief; and their sorrow even now threatens the continuance of man's ordinary satisfactions. Lowered vitality cannot but lead to depression. The *ennui* of ordinary men is a kind of echo of the groans of the aspiring, from whom now seems to be departing the old buoyant energy derived from a sense of immortality, from "the power of an endless life."

Many in these days are quite conscious that they are feeding on the husks fit for swine; and yet they scarcely dare to hope for anything better. When the dissatisfied prodigal says within himself, "I will arise, and go to my Father," the voice of wisdom and profoundest knowledge now often seems to whisper to him the terrible revelation that he has no Father and no home, that he has but dreamed of a by-gone peace and tenderness that never really existed. Wise physicians of the soul, when asked in these days whether they can "minister to a mind diseased," are compelled to own that they cannot do so effectually, if deprived of their old healing balms and life-giving cordials. It really seems as if, even though in reality there should be no future life, we must invent one, in order to make this life tolerable. Hence, perhaps, the fantastic doctrine of immortality taught by the Positivists, which, if their creed be true, is an attempt on the part of our race at large to evade the force of

the terrific and petrifying answer of an ancient oracle to an individual man in other days, "Mayest thou ne'er know the truth of what thou art."

Therefore I genuinely believe that the very best service which a thoughtful spirit can now render to its race is to face the haunting spectre of modern life, doubt of a future existence, to grapple honestly with all besetting difficulties, to seek to know the very actual truth, to walk alone through the very valley of the shadow of death, not shutting one's eyes from fear, but gazing with resolute candour into the blackest abysses of unfathomable despair; grasping with tenacious hands our one poor flickering lantern of human reason and human love, and praying fervently to the great Lord of the universe that He will either enlighten us or slay us.

Sorrowful indeed must ever be this lonely quest of the venturesome pilgrim soul. Nor must it expect much sympathy from man. The world's innumerable "fools" will account such daring nothing better than madness. And the Pharisaically orthodox will anathematize the perplexed and yearning soul, as Job's narrow-minded friends were ready to curse that intrepid spiritual pioneer, when the prolonged bitterness of a hopeless grief wrung from his tortured heart that forlorn cry of sacred and baffled aspiration, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" Had our modern stony-hearted Pharisees stood beneath the

cross of Jesus, the Infinite Pity, when His darkened spirit uttered those words of fathomless despair and doubt, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" it is likely enough that they would have discerned nothing but culpable unbelief in that sad pessimistic utterance of God's unique and sinless Son. The Christian church has often had nothing but anathemas for those who have dared to drink the very dregs of their beloved Master's cup of sorrow.

But the resolute inquirer may still find some comfort from God, even if he receive none from most of those who claim to represent God. It is a blessed, even though an awful, thing to "think God's thoughts after Him," to see things as they really are, to know the actual truth. Even though Jacob's thigh shrank, his mind and soul were for ever enlarged and elevated by his strange wrestling with the mysterious possessor of a loftier knowledge. And the Christian heart has the deep consolation of hoping that its present sufferings may bring ample recompense hereafter, in the form of peace and strength for others. The faithful, though perplexed, soul does not strive for itself alone. Else at times it might yearn to give up the contest, and might cry to the Creator, like despondent Elijah, "It is enough ; now, O Lord, take away my life ; for I am not better—or wiser—than my fathers." The Christian heart believes that its long, sad sojourn in the valley of the shadow of death will enable it to

become in after years a "son of consolation" to many a weary and baffled fellow-pilgrim. Even in its hour of solitary agony, when God "hath smitten it into the place of dragons, and covered it with the shadow of death," the trembling human spirit seems to catch the faint whisperings of God's far-off undying benignity, at once cheering and directing it with the old, wise, sympathetic words, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not ; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

I propose now, with all possible calmness and candour, to discuss this mighty question, the question as to man's destiny. And in doing this, I am well aware that we have to confront many new sources of difficulty and doubt, and that many of the old arguments in defence of our faith are now practically obsolete and useless. For instance, I suppose that no candid and reflecting reader of Butler's famous "Analogy" now finds his arguments for the credibility of a future life quite satisfactory or conclusive. We have learnt, since Butler's days, that the soul is far more closely connected with the body than it was once thought to be. Plato's theory of the absolute separateness and independence of the soul is manifestly misleading. The soul is in this life far more intimately related to the bodily organs than a passenger is to the ship in which he travels. Bishop Butler seems to infer that the soul can act without

any physical organs, merely because we know that it can dispense with the services of *some* of our usual organs. He seems to imagine that our real selves are absolutely independent of matter, and that our organs of sense and perception are only instruments—as much as eye-glasses are—by means of which the spiritual being acts. But we now realize the fact that injury to these organs may involve, so far as we can judge, permanent degradation to the soul itself in this life. A blow on the head has often altered a man's moral character vitally. A musician may be thwarted for the time by the bad condition of the instrument on which he is playing; but his permanent capacities, his appreciation of music, and his inner nature, remain unimpaired.

I do not at all think that Christianity is committed to any particular theory as to the natural immortality of the finite soul, or as to its absolute independence of matter in every form. In fact it seems to imply a contrary doctrine, when it speaks of the Creator as of one "who only hath immortality." The Christian view appears to be that the life of the finite soul is entirely dependent upon the uncreated and undying life of God. "Because I live, ye shall live also." These words appear to teach plainly enough that ours is a derived and not a natural immortality; that our souls escape abiding death only by the grace or favour of God, and not in their own connatural right.

The "wages" of our original finiteness and corruption is death ; but "the gift of God is eternal life."

I do not think that St. Paul held at all Bishop Butler's doctrine of the absolute independence of the spiritual or mental principle within us. On the contrary, strange to say, I think it is clear that this apostle's views were very far nearer to those favoured by modern science. He seems to have caught a real glimpse of the truth, that there are in the universe forms of matter so subtle, and so ethereal, as to be in many ways vitally different from what we commonly call matter. Butler scarcely thought a body a real necessity at all ; St. Paul yearned after a "spiritual body." The Bishop seems to have looked with perfect complacency on the prospect of being entirely disembodied ; the apostle exclaimed, "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." I have often thought that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection is almost a superfluity in the teaching of Butler, whereas in St. Paul's teaching it has a very real significance. The author of the "Analogy" appears, like many other philosophers, to have had an almost Gnostic contempt for matter, as a merely temporary adjunct or crutch of mind ; but St. Paul seems to have looked forward to the transfiguration and sublimation of matter, so that it should at length be counted worthy to stand in the glory of God's

immediate presence. Concerning matter as well as mind the great apostle wrote thus ; " For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." Platonism, or Neo-Platonism, is not an indispensable basis of our Christian hopes. On the contrary, I feel grateful to modern science for suggesting the possibility of a glorious, but in some sense embodied, existence, which I am able in some dim way partially to conceive. I am glad to think that, if I live beyond the grave, it is not necessary that I should be a mere ghost, or else a grossly material being as I am on earth.

Of all modern English writers on the question of a future life I think that John Stuart Mill is, in many respects, the most dispassionate, calm, and interesting. The serene candour of John Locke himself appears to have diffused itself through Mill's posthumous essays on religion. And, on so very grave and vital a subject, impartial reason and sober-minded candour are incomparably more valuable than any amount of fervid rhetoric. Nor is this collection of Mill's thoughts without a certain pathos of its own. It depicts a pilgrimage and a progress of the soul. In it we seem to perceive imagination growing and spreading out its wings.

In the later and more hopeful essay—separated by an interval of some fifteen years from the earlier and

more negative one—it is plain enough that the spirit of Mill has journeyed very far indeed from the "barren and dry land" of his father's prosaic and soulless unbelief. God "leads the blind by a way that they know not." Deeper human affections had so enlarged this thinker's nature, that it could not rest satisfied where his father rested. And so, at the end of his life, we find him knocking at the gates of the great Theistic hope, though still full of uncertainty as to receiving any answer. In the case of this great philosopher, the soul had "come to itself," and to a great extent realized its forlorn condition and its mighty needs; and then it cried to the far-off Lord of the universe, with feelings of mingled despondency and hope, "If Thou canst do anything, help us."

I think that a consideration of Mill's two essays on religion will help us a good deal in forming an estimate of the arguments for and against the belief in a future life. In the earlier essay on the "Utility of Religion," our author appears far more opposed to the Christian hope than he does in the later essay, viz., the one on "Theism." The interval of about fifteen years had evidently produced a great moral and mental change. In the earlier essay our philosopher does not seem to realize the great effect which the hope of immortality has on our *present* life; in the later discussion he does perceive this to a great extent.

Some of Mill's statements in the earlier essay are extremely questionable, if not obviously false. He argues that "History, so far as we know it, bears out the opinion that mankind can perfectly well do without the belief in a heaven. The Greeks had anything but a tempting idea of a future state." This passage seems to me to contain a good deal of error. In the first place, it is not at all certain to what extent the deepest and noblest souls amongst the Greeks were satisfied without a future life of progress and elevation. Socrates, apparently, believed firmly in a very real existence beyond the grave. And one can hardly help supposing that the heroic friendships of ancient Greece must have made many hearts yearn for reunion after death. I have often thought that these marvellous friendships were a real religion to some of the Greeks, the soul's truest sacraments, begetting in it a hungering and thirsting after life eternal. In them the doctrine of immortality was implicit, and only needed to be developed. Perhaps these grand and transcendent, yet thoroughly human, affections to some extent counteracted the withering influence of philosophical Pantheism, in much the same way that the worship of the Virgin Mary counteracted the desiccating influence of that scholastic theology, whose Christ was so absolutely deified as to be no longer human at all.

Moreover, it is one thing to do without a consola-

tion which we have never had, and quite another thing to dispense with it after prolonged experience of its invigorating and sustaining influence. In my opinion, the truest and most real sense in which Christ "brought life and immortality to light" is this, viz., that He so vitalized human nature, so quickened and developed its germinal instincts, that the moral and spiritual part of man henceforth claimed another and a grander life, and could not thrive without faith in it. Christ interpreted man to himself, and enabled him to read the writing of God's fingers on the walls of his own soul. The human race cannot go back to its childhood, even if it desired to do so.

Mill argues that the idea of extinction is "not really or naturally terrible" from the fact that it is held out as a *reward* in the Buddhist creed. He here entirely ignores the fact that the deep Pessimism, which makes the Buddhists hate a future life of consciousness, also makes them hate the *present* life. Of course, if *all* conscious life is an evil, its prolongation in another world is not to be desired. Moreover, the wish for and belief in extinction are intimately associated with the inactivity and torpor of the Buddhist character. The feebleness of the present life makes its survival of the crisis called death very improbable. These religionists have not in them now "the power of an endless life." Nor do they in the least agree with us that it is "more life and fuller that

we want." The ideal man of the Buddhist creed is very far indeed from being a normal man ; he is hardly a man at all. A mutilated specimen of humanity is not a fair index of men's capacities and their destiny. Mill might almost as well argue that friendship is not necessary or natural to man, because some individuals are incapable of it.

Curiously enough, in this essay of Mill's, the misery of the present life is regarded as inducing men to dislike and disbelieve in a future life, and also as disposing them to demand it and believe in it. We have noticed already that present wretchedness makes the Buddhists yearn for extinction ; but we are also told that it is the real reason why others believe in a future heaven. But, perhaps, this inconsistency is apparent rather than real. A very deep Pessimism makes men long for annihilation, because it inspires a very gloomy view as to the possibilities of the universe ; but a milder form of Pessimism only makes men disgusted with this life, and still leaves them some hopes as to other modes of existence in other worlds.

In this essay Mill teaches that, if man's life on earth were more satisfactory, he would probably cease to care for another existence. His words are, " They who have had their happiness can bear to part with existence, but it is hard to die without having ever lived." Again he says, " It seems to me not only

possible but probable that, in a higher and above all a happier condition of human life, not annihilation, but immortality may be the burdensome idea." Here I think we may trace somewhat of the withering and desiccating influence of our author's early education. He also remarks that "it is no unnatural part of the idea of a happy life that life itself be laid down, after the best that it can give has been fully enjoyed through a long lapse of time ; when all its pleasures, even those of benevolence, are familiar, and nothing untasted and unknown is left to stimulate curiosity and keep up the desire of prolonged existence."

Yet, even in this earlier essay, Mill's heart was beginning to contradict his head, and forced him to own that the sceptic, by his scepticism, does lose one "real and valuable consolation, the hope of reunion with those dear to him who have ended their earthly life before him. That loss is, indeed, neither to be denied nor extenuated. In many cases it is beyond the reach of comparison or estimate."

It is indeed truly marvellous that, in an age of insatiable curiosity and unending discoveries, this philosopher should suppose that a time is in the least likely to come when the short term of our present life will suffice to satisfy our desire for knowledge. If we are not immortal, one would still like to have even two or three years after our departure from the body, in which period, with hugely developed faculties and

strange powers of inconceivably rapid locomotion, we might survey the glories of the universe, in some measure detect its central mysteries, and then die in the glad rapture of an immeasurable awe, penetrated through and through by the ineffable splendours of the Sublime. Then death, if not exactly "swallowed up in victory," would at all events be swallowed up in gratified wonder. On earth to many a noble-hearted student of the cosmos the sting of death is ignorance. Deep down in our minds remains an ineradicable craving for further light. We should like to understand a little of the meaning of the universe, and discern a little of its foundations, even though we should for ever perish the next moment. And so far is our curiosity about the universe from being satisfied, that we might truly affirm that it is far keener and more vivid in us than it was in our ancestors. The victories of modern science have much increased our yearning for a larger knowledge. Astronomy now makes us feel more than ever that "our citizenship is in the heavens." The more painfully we realize our present provincialism, the more we long for a central position. Even though God may have, to a great extent, hidden Himself from this generation, in the revelations of modern astronomy we have at least a brilliant after-glow of the divine glory.

It is also strange that a writer like Mill, who held substantially the doctrine of Evolution, and who

rather disparaged the value of merely popular opinion, should attach any great importance to the fact that the doctrine of a future life is not believed universally and at all stages of human development. That is no argument against its truth or value. If the theory of Evolution be true, the later utterances of the human faculties are far more significant than those of earlier date ; or, in other words, developed reason is a better guide than incipient reason. The further we travel from our pristine animality, the clearer becomes our vision of the loftiest truths.

Mill's belief in the very serious limitations of the Creator's power also made it difficult for him to feel any great confidence in the reality of a future life. One great argument in favour of this confidence is the fact that the noblest natures yearn for a fuller and grander life hereafter ; and it seems difficult to suppose that this yearning is implanted in man for no purpose. To which Mill makes the curious answer, that perhaps the same limitation of power, which prevents the Creator from satisfying our deep yearning for immortality, may have compelled Him to implant it in us. But the Creator disclosed to us by modern science, whether, strictly speaking, omnipotent or not, hardly appears so extremely powerless as Mill thought He might be.

This philosopher does not seem to have thought much of the Materialistic objections to the credibility

of a future life. To them he assigned far less weight than we might have expected him to give them. He held that a future existence is certainly not disproved by physical science. He said that thought and feeling are the most real things of all; nay, to us the only things *known* to be real; and he considered that we cannot infer their utter cessation merely from the vanishing of those material things which we only know in and through them. On this subject he thought that there was no real evidence either way; that the absence of all positive evidence did not, legitimately, even suggest a negative conclusion. In this respect Mill was more conservative than the late W. R. Greg, who considered that the physical evidence was all in favour of belief in annihilation.

As a practical conclusion, Mill judged that the arguments for a future life, taken collectively, were neither satisfactory nor yet valueless; that they afford us a low degree of probability in favour of the great hope. And in his later essay, that on Theism, this philosopher seems to have a far greater sense of the moral value of faith in a future existence than he had when writing the earlier essay, viz., that on "The Utility of Religion." In the later discussion of the subject, he says, "The beneficial effect of such a hope is far from trifling. It makes life and human nature a far greater thing to the feelings, and gives greater strength as well as greater solemnity to all

the sentiments which are awakened in us by our fellow-creatures and by mankind at large." "The benefit consists less in the presence of any specific hope than in the enlargement of the general scale of the feelings ; the loftier aspirations being no longer in the same degree checked and kept down by a sense of the insignificance of human life, by the disastrous feeling of 'not worth while.'"

On the whole, considering John Stuart Mill's nature and early training, I think that he came as near to the great Theistic faith as we could reasonably expect. And his writings on this subject are all the more valuable and instructive in some ways from the fact that he was, to a very great extent, devoid of those elements of our being which chiefly lead to belief in a future life. If the considerations which influenced this author could carry him so far, I think that other supplementary ideas, derived from quite different sources, may very well suffice to lead us on to a genuine conviction of the reality of a life beyond the grave. The iron had entered into this thinker's soul in his early youth, and from its fetters he never entirely escaped. The sombre gloom of a depressing Necessitarianism caused him to underrate alike the possibilities of the human soul and the power of the Creator himself. A kind of blight brooded over and impoverished the whole universe. On Mill's principles, one can almost fancy the Creator

growing weary and tired of His futile productions, which irresistible Necessity for ever mars and spoils. In the soul of this philosopher imagination was in permanent bondage to analysis. The voice of conscience was to a great extent stifled by Necessitarianism ; it never exhibited its most striking phenomena ; sin scarcely existed. Man's spiritual nature only existed on sufferance, almost as a sort of playground, in which the idealizing faculty might get rid of its superfluous energies. The Infinite of thought and the Infinite of affection were both virtually excluded from Mill's system ; and these are the truest Jacob's ladder, connecting earth with heaven. It is the feeling of boundlessness here which chiefly makes us believe in boundlessness hereafter. It is because we now potentially possess the eternal life, that we believe in its actual development hereafter. Mill lived perpetually in a sort of spiritual Holland, and could therefore only very dimly imagine the far-off Hima-layas of the ideal world. Aspiration never carried him away to any lofty mountain of vision. In escaping the sense of sin he escaped a veritable revelation ; he heard no divine deliverer preaching to "the spirits in prison." Neither the kingdom of God nor the kingdom of Satan was within him. He dwelt under the despotism of a cramping Necessitarianism, and walked amidst the ashes of withered possibilities and desiccated spontaneities.

Having, I hope, learnt something from the speculations of this most candid thinker, let us now look at the present state of the controversy regarding a future life, and let us endeavour to discern what solid grounds there are for our faith and hope. And I think we shall find that, on the whole, our position is a somewhat stronger one than that occupied by the defenders of immortality in earlier days, though we may have to encounter some new obstacles to belief.

As regards the physical arguments, I think we must admit that, at first sight, the most striking of them seem decidedly adverse to our great hope, though they are no stronger than they were thousands of years ago. All the merely physical phenomena of death appear to me quite horribly suggestive of annihilation. And the fact that men still believe in a future existence, in spite of these obtrusive arguments, would seem to indicate that the moral arguments on the other side of the question must be exceedingly strong. Our senses suggest to us the dismal creed of Materialism. And, even granting that there is such a thing as spiritual substance, which is the basis of each individual soul, the physical phenomena of death would, if taken alone, lead to no more satisfying conclusion than that of Hume. As regards this spiritual substance Hume says: "Nature employs it as a kind of paste or clay ;

modifies it into a variety of forms or existences ; dissolves, after a time, each modification, and from its substance erects a new form. As the same material substance may successively compose the bodies of all animals, the same spiritual substance may compose their minds. Their consciousness, or that system of thought which they formed during life, may be continually dissolved by death, and nothing interests them in the new modification." (Huxley's "Hume," page 174.)

But we ought not to attach any very immense weight to suggestions thrust upon us by observation of the bodily phenomena of death. After all, these suggestions apply legitimately *only* to our bodies; and concerning these, after death, we need care nothing. Nor are the arguments of Pantheism irresistible either. The difficulty of conceiving that our individuality will survive the shock of separation from its organism, probably arises from our ignorance, and might be no difficulty if we had fuller knowledge. On *a priori* grounds, it might well appear far more incredible that souls should come into being through bodily generation, than that, once existing, they should survive the dissolution of their dwelling-place. Compared to the creation or birth of a soul, all that may afterwards happen to it is really far less wonderful. And it seems to me that modern science in some respects helps us here, especially in its teaching as to the

actual or probable existence of a form of matter so ethereal as to be almost entirely different from what is commonly called by that name. Herein religion begins to discern the possibility of that "spiritual body" for which, through long centuries, it has been yearning. Moreover, some of the truly marvellous discoveries of recent science are aids to faith, in that they vastly enlarge our conceptions of the innate possibilities of the universe. The miraculous has, to a great extent, migrated from religion into science; misunderstood and perverted by theologians, it has, like Paul and Barnabas of old, "turned to the Gentiles." The power of storing up and long afterwards recalling a multitude of words, by means of a most trifling physical agent, speaks most impressively to our imagination, and dimly suggests a sort of projection of an epitomized physical world into the spiritual. The doctrine of the correlation of forces also opens to the imagination a vast vista of quasi-magical transformations. Thus, by invigorating and expanding imagination, modern science considerably lessens some of our difficulties with regard to a future life. Some of the more rational forms of psychical investigation also seem likely to aid our faith.

And here, I think, we may perceive the chief value of that interesting book, "The Unseen Universe." Perhaps it does not add very much to the greatest arguments for a future life, if these arguments are

viewed objectively ; but it does very considerably aid faith subjectively, by enhancing the power and enlarging the range of imagination. And it is just here that men were formerly weak. The physical arguments for annihilation were strong, out of all proportion to their logical value, merely because of the impotence of the human mind to conceive a future existence independent of the old bodily organization. From this tyranny of imbecility, from this oppressive *argumentum ad hominem*, from this bewildering spiritual nightmare, the authors of "The Unseen Universe," and other thinkers of the same sort, have really done a good deal to deliver us. We can now scarcely believe that the resources of the universe are inadequate to effect the continuance of our personal life, if this should be deemed desirable on moral grounds. The range, scope, and power of the argument from analogy in favour of a future life are now greatly increased. Deism is utterly out of date. Worlds are now found to be perpetually influencing and almost invading other worlds ; nothing depends on its own isolated resources ; all things are ours, provincialists though we be. The whole physical universe shares our perishableness ; both it and we shall one day be re-absorbed into the spiritual world, whence we came. And as that world furnished us with our present coarse organizations, so we believe that it is able hereafter to furnish us with finer ones.

The far-off, inexhaustible sources of the undecaying spiritual universe cry confidently to us, as Paul to the Corinthian converts, "Our mouth is open unto you ; our heart is enlarged ; ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels." Our clinging to a coarsely physical organization is an infirmity of ours.

Thus, to a very great extent, science now heals the wounds which it inflicted on the human spirit in earlier days. Awe and wonder have created a soul beneath the old grisly ribs of a Necessitarian mechanicalness. The highest science does not tell us that a future life is impossible for us ; it only says that it cannot guarantee it to us ; it leaves us quite free to consult our moral and spiritual nature. And it also sends us forth on our high inquiry with a certain element of grandeur added to our being. The mind that has been nourished on the glories of infinite space feels scarcely a stranger amidst the sublimities of infinite time. A kind of boundlessness possesses us. The soul feels that, as a sympathetic and rational inhabitant of the cosmos, it is indeed "a citizen of no mean city." More and more we find it easy to believe with Emerson, that what the great Creator prepares for us hereafter must needs be up to the level of our highest faculties, and worthy for Him to bestow upon us. In view of the unveiled potentialities of the universe, the doctrine of annihila-

tion seems too simple and too low a solution of our besetting mysteries.

Thus we are able all the better to withstand the humiliation that has come upon us through the doctrine of Evolution. This doctrine was a great shock to the soul at first; but it is beginning to recover its confidence. I can well imagine that immortality seemed eminently unlikely, when men first realized their animal descent. The shock must have been as great as that which came upon our race when science forced our ancestors to realize the utter insignificance of our dwelling-place, which had once been thought the very central core of the universe. But now we are beginning to rally from our apparent defeat, as some of the ancient Jews recovered from the humiliation which at first filled their minds, when they heard of a lowly and suffering, instead of a kingly and conquering, Messiah. The soul now no longer "abhors the virgin's womb" of matter. The status or rank of matter in the universe has of late been greatly raised; its old grossness is no longer reckoned a necessary part of it. The realization of our lowly descent has also led us to consider carefully the very great and vital difference which there is between man, in his present state of development, and the lower animals. Progressiveness, as the distinguishing mark of humanity, now shines forth all the more clearly, when we realize on the one hand

from what a very low beginning our pilgrimage has been, and on the other hand how entirely stationary the rest of the animal world appears to be. If we have indeed come so very far, it seems likely that we shall go much further. If the starting-point of our race was mere animality, its goal would seem to be an almost divine perfection.

And so we Christians can still believe in a future existence on grounds derived from reason, quite apart from revelation. The view of Archbishop Whately on this subject seems to me rather absurd. In order to exalt the light given in the Bible, he greatly depreciated the light given by reason. He argued that Christianity alone gives us a genuinely substantial foundation for faith in a future life. He thought that *all* the arguments for the *natural* immortality of the soul apply with exactly the same force to prove an immortality not only of brutes, but even of plants. Now, this is plainly untrue. The *moral* arguments in favour of the natural immortality of the soul are none of them applicable to plants, and a good many of them, and those the most striking, are not applicable to brutes. An essentially progressive nature, the instinct of worship, the sense of sin together with profound moral aspiration, distinguish man clearly enough from the lower animals. There is no insuperable difficulty in conceiving that immortality, like holiness, is a superadded gift of God, and not a

mere development of animal potentialities. Our race may, in its long progress, have picked up, as it were, the "power of an endless life," just as we know that it has somehow picked up the faculty of philosophical speculation. In the present races of apes it would be about as difficult to detect the germs of transcendental philosophizing as those of spirituality and its attendant eternity of existence. Some of the most advanced evolutionists quite realize this. Mr. Fiske, in his interesting little book, "Man's Destiny viewed in the light of his Origin," declares his belief in the reality of a life beyond the grave for man. He says that he sees no insuperable difficulty in supposing that the mental or spiritual principle in man may have acquired sufficient concentration and power to survive the shock of the death of the body. There is nothing really inconsistent with Evolution in such a belief. And to those who, like myself, do not consider the doctrine of Evolution a *complete* explanation of human development, who believe that, throughout long ages, the Supreme Mind has fostered man's embryonic or nascent spirituality and touched it to finer and yet finer issues, the doctrine of a grander life hereafter seems a perfectly natural and even necessary belief. Why should God develop in man faculties out of all relation to this life, if he is never to enter into a higher and fuller life in another world? Are our

noblest faculties nothing but deceptive and unmeaning excrescences?

We are constantly being told by scientific writers that there is absolutely no real evidence in favour of belief in a future life. Now, I perfectly admit that there is no *demonstrative* evidence on this subject. Probably a positive demonstration of a life beyond the grave would so reduce the significance and importance of this life, as to act very injuriously on man's temporal welfare. But it is grossly untrue to say that nothing is a real argument which does not amount to demonstration. Every day of our existence, in the ordinary concerns of life, in business, politics, friendship, and in scientific investigation itself, we act on a quite contrary theory. We are and must be guided by probability of various degrees. And with regard to the continuance of our higher life after the death of the body, the very fact that man has come to believe in it, in spite of so many suggestions to the contrary by our senses, is, to say the least, a very striking phenomenon, and one well worthy of consideration. I should not myself attach any very great importance to the *mere* universality of this belief, even if it had ever been quite universal. For, unquestionably, man outgrows very many of his old ways of thinking and feeling. There was once a universal childhood of our race; and the opinions generally or universally entertained at that stage of

human development are of no great importance to us. Thus, faith in ghosts and witches passes away ; and we smile at the credulity of our ancestors. But faith in a future life does not pass away ; and the persistence of this belief in the highest, deepest, and most spiritual minds, notwithstanding all that is urged to the contrary, does assuredly appear a very striking argument, and one that the doctrine of Evolution rather strengthens than impairs. If man is merely a development of animal potentialities, how did he come to entertain a belief so persistently and absolutely contradicted by all the suggestions of our animal nature ? Who, or what put such a strangely ambitious idea into his head ? If it was but a phase of the old belief in ghosts, why does it not pass away when that belief is gone ? The fact that this idea of immortality survives the collapse of so many apparently similar ideas, the fact that it persists chiefly in the most spiritual natures, which have travelled furthest from the old sources of semi-animal knowledge, and have cancelled most of the old original instinctive faiths of wondering brutes ; the fact that this marvellous idea, which was born apparently in the rude caves of uncultivated superstition, is yet able to transcend its own former limitations, and become the crowning glory of the most soaring philosophy and the very soul of the most ethereal sanctity ;—all these considerations certainly suggest that the idea of a

nobler life hereafter is in man an inspired and deathless idea, a divine elemental germ sown in his heart by the Creator, a germ which can never perish, though it may be developed in the most various ways. This faith seems to be in man a sort of correlative of that pillar of fire, the divine Ideal, by which God leads on our pilgrim race.

Emerson tells us of two thoughtful and highly cultivated men who devoted themselves, through long years, to searching for light on this great question. And after many years they met again; and each was obliged to confess to the other that he had gained no fresh light, after prolonged investigation. Upon which Emerson observes, that he thinks that the strong impulse which drove these men to seek proof of a future life was in itself better positive evidence than their failure was negative evidence. Why should man be for ever tantalized? Are illusions the necessary penalty of elevation? The peace of cows is never troubled by the spiritual nightmare of futile grappling with insoluble and irrelevant enigmas.

Of course, the power or cogency of the moral arguments in favour of belief in a future life must depend entirely on our view as to the reality and nature of the Creative Mind. Apart from faith in a personal or super-personal God, there can be no valid grounds for holding that man has a conscious

existence after the death of the body. It is only because we hold that personality, or consciousness, is the highest thing in the universe, that we ourselves expect to retain it in a more perfect form for ever. The God of the Pantheists affords us no solid reason for believing in a personal life after death. Being, as it were, only half alive Himself, He cannot whisper into our ears that old consolatory assurance, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Nor could we rationally expect a future life, unless we believed in a righteous, merciful, and benevolent God, to whom we are genuinely related. A God who created the world out of caprice, and then left it to itself, would inspire us with no solid hope of an eternal life. In other parts of this book I have, I hope, given some real grounds for retaining the old faith in the God of Christianity, that wise and gracious Being of infinite love, whom we call the Father of our spirits; and I need not now repeat my arguments. Personally, I rest contented, and with unshaken affiance, on that old sublime declaration of St. John, that "God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." I cannot believe that pity, sympathy, charity, and love were put into us by an entity having none of its own. I cannot believe that the creature is nobler than the Creator. I cannot adore mere size or power. Whether I will or no, I am constrained to believe in the indefeasible

sovereignty and supremacy of goodness. Heaven and earth may pass away, but the sublime glory of the moral Ideal can never pass away. Though it should be buried beneath the ruins of fallen worlds, on the third day it must rise again. I cordially agree with Emerson, that the ultimate welfare of our race may safely and fearlessly be left in the charge of the fontal reason and the fontal love of this mysterious universe. Emerson said that, in all sane minds, the belief in a future life rests on the preliminary conviction that, if it is best that conscious life should continue, it will do so ; and, if it is not best, it will not continue ; and that, if we could know all the facts of the case, we should readily acquiesce in the decision of the Supreme Power.

Strong in this conviction, I am not in the least moved by the strange reasonings of Mr. F. W. Newman against our faith, in his recent pamphlet, "Life after Death," in which he recants his old arguments in favour of the doctrine of a future life. His comparison of our relation towards God with that of a dog towards a friendly master, and the conclusions which he draws from this comparison, are in many ways essentially misleading. This writer thinks that God would only feel a very transient grief for the dying out of the whole human race, just as the man feels only an evanescent sorrow for the death of his dog. Mr. Newman thinks that, in either case, it

is unreasonable to expect that the higher being should feel as much affection for the lower as the lower feels for him. The dog loves his master more than his master loves him; and according to this writer, man loves God more than God loves him. Mr. Newman's whole comparison is essentially fallacious. Man did not create the dog, and create it in such a way that it should ever yearn for that which it could not attain. God did create us, and create us with the quenchless thirst for another life.

Moreover, I do not suppose that many deep souls will agree with this writer as to what constitutes greatness in a moral and spiritual being. The strong instinctive love of the dog is in many ways inferior to rational love; but it is a beautiful type or shadow of grander and loftier affections, and a thing by no means to be despised by man; for this instinctive love has in it a loyalty and a boundlessness which are often sadly wanting in human affection. And when we come to the higher order of beings, to the genuinely spiritual life, men in general do *not* think that it is the lower nature which feels the greater love. St. Paul was higher, not lower, than his Corinthian converts when he said, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Christ's love for His disciples was deeper far than theirs for

Him. Peter might deny Jesus ; but Jesus would never deny Peter. It is love which ever prompts the higher nature to forgive ; and to forgive is divine. The Christian doctrine never has been that man's love is greater than God's. Even a pagan poet could conceive more grandly of the Supreme Power than Mr. Newman does ; for he said, "*Carior est illis homo quam sibi*," man is dearer to the Creator than he is even to himself. And this great saying of incipient faith was more than corroborated by the Christian revelation. Jesus unveiled to His followers somewhat of the very inner nature and the supreme glory of the Creator's unseen life, when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The greatness and the blessedness of God are quite inseparable from His supreme benignity. From of old, speaking by the mouth of a great Hebrew prophet, the Eternal Wisdom proclaims clearly that it is far more tender and more pitiful than even the most loving of the children of men : "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee." And so St. John could say with perfect truth, "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love."

In consequence of all that I have already said, I can see no grounds for disbelieving in a future life, if

the moral arguments in favour of its reality are cogent and conclusive. In my judgment, they are of such a nature ; and they are so plain and so many that I can now do scarcely more than mention them. Nor is it possible to make them appear of equal force to minds and hearts of different kinds. In order to appreciate duly the full weight and significance of these arguments, a certain depth of nature, a certain amount of actual experience of life, a broad sympathy with the abounding sorrows, pains, disappointments, failures, and disasters of man's existence here, are indispensably necessary. Dives is not a competent judge of this great question ; for the most important facts bearing on it are unknown to him. Nor is any one an adequate judge of this matter who knows nothing of the grandest heights and depths of human affection. Mary goeth unto the grave of Lazarus her brother, to weep ; and there she meets the great conqueror of death. The world's graves are often its truest temples. Sorrowing despair, like Jacob of old, wrestles manfully with the mysterious angel that guards the secrets of a higher world, till the day breaks, and the shadows begin to flee away. Deep and bereaved human affection for ever wears in this life a crown of thorns ; it is at once ennobled and saddened ; it wrests secrets from angels, but they smite its thigh. In the language of an ancient prophet, its heart "fears, and is enlarged." Some

real appreciation of the Sublime, some deep sense of awe and mystery and wonder, some perception that the universe is indeed an "awful place," some realization of the intrinsic glory and elevating influence of worship, are also necessary to those who would understand aright the force of the moral arguments in favour of belief in a future life. And last, but not least, some sense of sin, some profundity of moral aspiration, some discontent with the actual and longing after the Ideal, some hungering and thirsting after righteousness, are also needed. Sin, though it may be the sting of death, is yet, when genuinely realized, also a revealer of immortality.

One strong moral argument in favour of belief in a future life is the unsatisfactory nature of our present life. This is a very real argument, *if* we believe in a benevolent God. When we realize the innumerable pains, sorrows, and agonies of man's present existence, we cannot help thinking that it would have been well for him to have never been born, if he is destined for no happier world hereafter. And in one respect we are more wretched than the lower animals; they are spared the pangs of *anticipated* suffering. In this way reason seems to increase grief; and sympathy increases it still more, so that a nature like that of Dives is the best constructed for happiness here. If men were well convinced that the idea of a future life is false, suicide would soon become more common,

especially amongst the more sensitive and sympathetic. Is there not some real reason for disbelieving a theory which would lead to such a result, which would make the finest characters the most anxious to depart out of this life?

Another argument is derived from the fact that God's moral government is only incipient here on earth. Justice is not done now in anything like an adequate way; the wicked very often prosper, and the righteous suffer to the end of their days. If justice is never to prevail, if sin is never to be punished in any effective way, if goodness is never to be recognized and rewarded, the conclusion is then inevitable: the Supreme Power cares nothing for what we call righteousness, or else is powerless to defend it. We say naturally, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

The inchoate condition of many of our highest faculties seems also to suggest faith in a continuance and development of life beyond the grave. Progressiveness is the distinguishing mark of man; and that would seem to be a sign or a sacrament of eternal life. And the fact that progress consists essentially in *regeneration*, in cancelling, or at least transcending, our old animal nature, in setting aside the senses and trusting ourselves to the guidance of reason and spirit, appears to indicate that we are being trained for a loftier kingdom, which mere flesh and blood—

merely refined animality—cannot inherit. The senses are far keener in many animals than they are in intellectual men. Our highest capacities may now be said to be wandering between two worlds; behind them is the old region of instinct, and before them the supersensible kingdom of God. Like Abraham, they have gone out, "not knowing whither they go."

If there is no future and grander life for us, we might not unnaturally murmur against reason, as the Israelites murmured against Moses, for bringing them out of the plenteousness of Egypt into the bleak aridity of the desert. Idealism is the prophet of reason; it is always "beholding the land that is very far off." It is born of a lofty discontent. Its very ground of existence is the recognized illusiveness of our present condition, the fact that none of the promises of God are fulfilled on earth. Hence Idealism is saturated with Faith in immortality. Either it is a deceiver, or else it is a prophet surveying the "promised land." Idealism in its moral aspects is a kind of mediator between God and man. It is as the eternal and immortal "Word" of God, pleading vehemently for the blasted and abortive souls of its undeveloped pilgrim brethren, pleading that their lives on earth were of necessity a failure, since "God gave them none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set their feet on"; and crying sorrowfully to the Creator over their graves of bewilderment

and despair, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Surely the strong pleadings of this "Eternal Word" of God must be successful. Even if, as Mill thought, God is not absolutely omnipotent, and has no very great regard for our interests, He might yet, as a kind of after-thought, grant our race a future life, when He found how pitiful a failure our earthly life had been, and how we dreamed of Him and His promises even in our graves of outcast hopelessness.

The glorious instinct of worship seems also to vindicate for us a reasonable hope of a grander life in God's nearer presence. This great instinct, in its purer and more highly developed state, appears to have little relation to our present existence. Essentially, it seems to be man's eager welcome and response to strange worlds of mystery and awe invading our poor provincial dwelling-place. If we are indeed descended from the lower animals, it seems quite incredible that we should have acquired this faculty of adoration and disinterested worship, unless the Creator is in some way training us for a loftier life. Why should He give us spiritual wings by which to mount up into His nearer presence, if it is in no sense true that "our citizenship is in the

heavens"? To me it always seems as if the noblest and most disinterested kind of worship were a sort of cancelling of our provincial finiteness.

I think also that our present moral nature is full of suggestions of a future life. God has not "left Himself without witness" in the very structure of our human morality. In order to kindle and sustain the highest and most constraining ethical emotions of man, we are virtually compelled to procure or steal fire from another world. Just as the physical world in which we live cannot do without the sun to warm and vivify it, so also our spiritual or moral world needs help and quickening from other worlds. The total isolation of our ethical life from the larger life of the universe with its vitalizing central mysteries, would eventually result in the permanent depression of all our highest faculties. This I endeavoured to show in my last discourse, and I need not now repeat my arguments. I will now only say that it seems supremely improbable that, with our present developed reason, we should derive our only permanently effectual moral inspiration from an absolutely false belief, and from a belief which we did not inherit from our animal ancestors.

In the judgment of many, the affections of man plead most eloquently of all for a future life. God has set eternity in our hearts, even though our heads may question it. The deepest human love is

saturated with faith in immortality. It cannot even speak at all without implying the eternal hope. The thought of "for ever" is inseparably blended with all the noblest utterances of the heart of man. The very crowning glory of humanity would fade and wither, if its grandest love ceased to outsoar instinctively the limits of time and sense. The affection of heroic souls is a real sacrament of eternity. If the Creator had destined our race for the charnel-house, I do not believe that He would have endowed it with such sublime depths of feeling. I rest confidently in the verdict of Christianity: "He that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God." And so the loftiest affections, being born of God, are accredited prophets of true religion. Infinity, with its consecrating words "for ever," is to our race a kind of everlasting priesthood, hallowing man's heroic affections and bestowing on them "a new name" entirely unknown to the lower animals, whose evanescent attachments have in them no sacred "power of an endless life."

And if God preserves for us the vital essence of our human love, we need not greatly trouble ourselves about the forms in which it may hereafter be clothed. It is natural, but still irrational, to yearn for the old familiar faces, and the old beloved signs and sacraments of our earthly love. It was natural that the apostles should long for the actual bodily presence of

Jesus their crucified friend, and should regard with discontent what they took for the mere spirit or ghost of Jesus. Whilst we remain here on earth, it must be ever thus. We cannot be both in the body and out of the body at the same time. And so *at present* we cannot conceive the deep mystic unions of souls beyond the grave. We cannot now realize the probable fact that our present bodies are essentially hindrances, and not aids, to the deepest communion. Yet, do we not sometimes feel, even now, as if we never can get *near enough* to the beings whom we love best, as if something always came between us to separate us? In a higher world it may very well come to pass that, when spiritual substance is, as it were, agglomerated in larger portions, when souls are joined together in real and abiding intimacy, we shall look back with horror to the tantalizing isolation which marred all earthly fellowship. I do not believe that anything intrinsically dear to us will be taken from us in another world. The whole will include various parts. It may very well be that we shall recognize, in their more ethereal form, the eyes that we knew and loved so well on earth. We need not think so meanly of the powers of the future world, as to suppose that they are inadequate to effect the sublimation and glorification of all that is best on earth, without destroying or even impairing its inner essence. We should remember that manhood has deeper joys

than those of childhood. It would not be wise on their part, if some philosophers amongst the lower animals were to declare that the human race must have lost all real joyousness in losing, to a very great extent, its old instinctive vivacity of animality. Progress is a process of gaining, not of losing. We may still legitimately cry with the tender human heart of St. Paul, "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

And thus, strong in our faith in eternal life and closer union with those whom we have loved and lost, we often cast eager, yearning glances into that higher world, where the dreams of this world shall at length be turned into realities, where the finite shall have put on the splendours of infinity without putting off any of its former glories, where man's Ideal shall have at last become actual, where God shall "gather together the outcasts of Israel," those mighty possibilities which the withering limitations of earth blasted before they could grow up. We weep not for the dead. We rather feel as Shelley felt concerning his departed friend. The spirit which breathes in the more hopeful parts of "Adonais" expresses our deepest thoughts on this high and awful subject :

"Peace, peace, he is not dead, he doth not sleep !
He hath awakened from the dream of life."

* * * * *

"IF A MAN DIE, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?" 387

"He has outsoared the shadow of our night."

* * * * *

"What Adonais is why fear we to become?"

* * * * *

"'Tis Adonais calls! Oh, hasten thither!

No more let life divide what death can join together."

* * * * *

"I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar!

Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of heaven,

The soul of Adonais, like a star,

Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."

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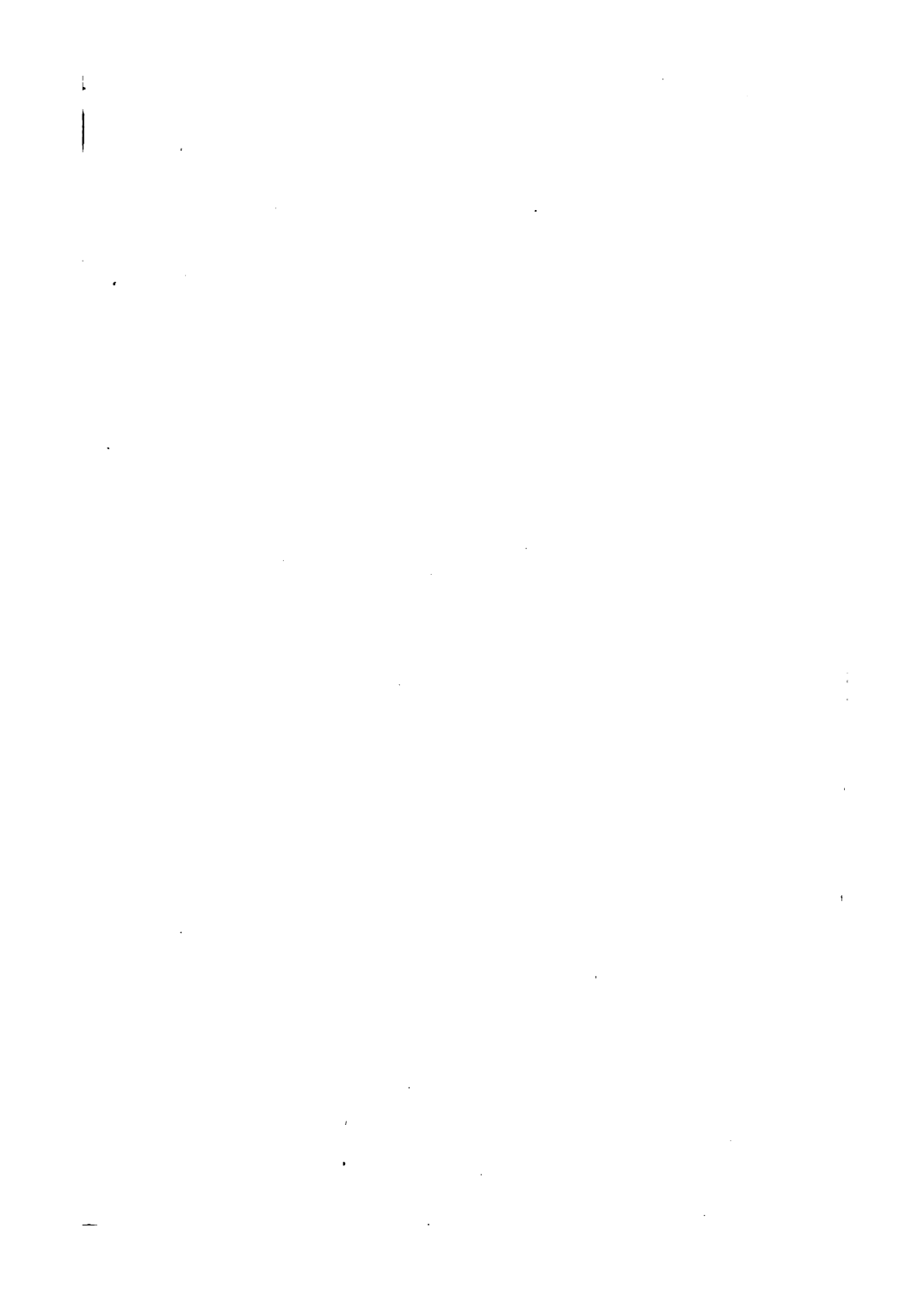
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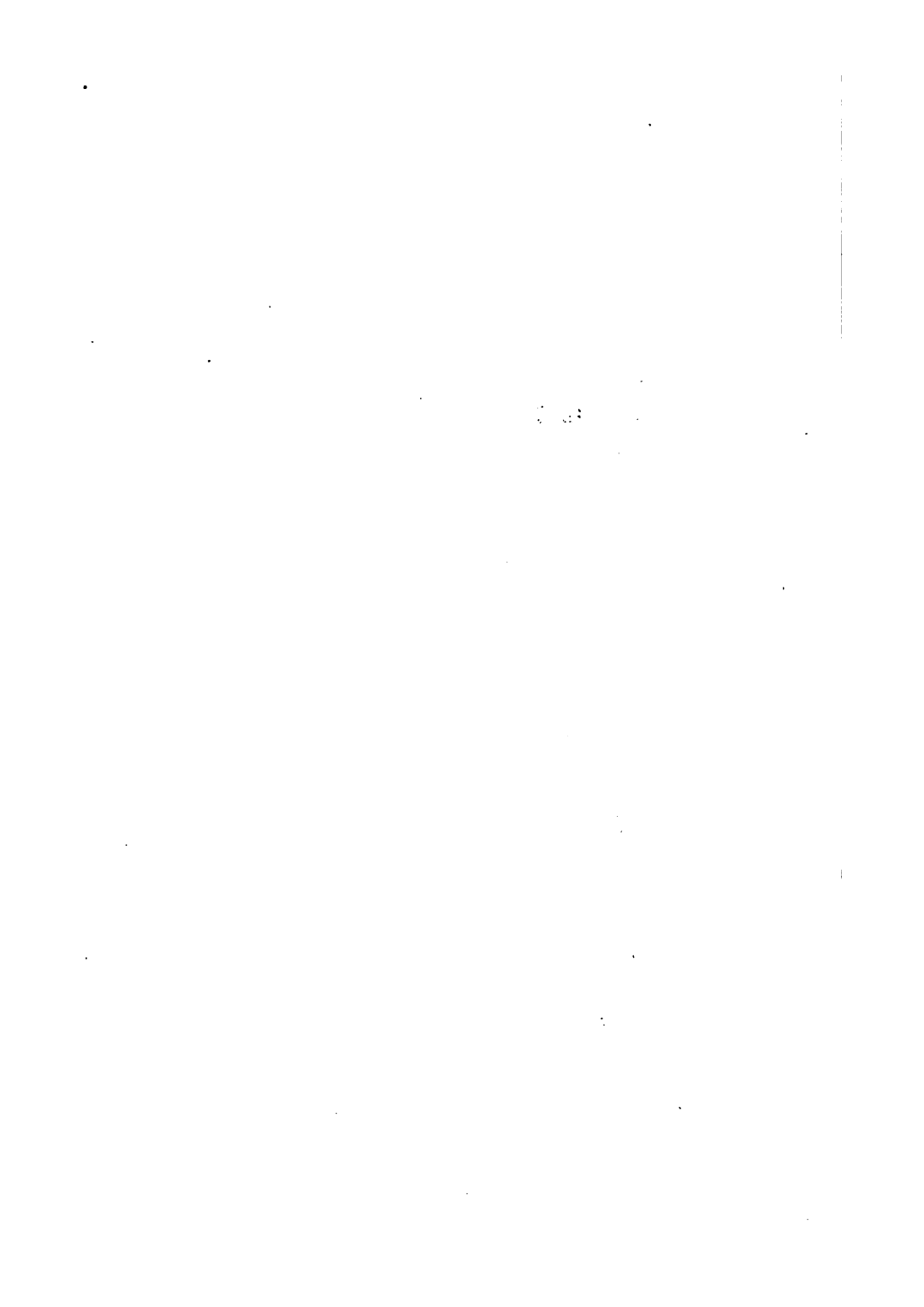
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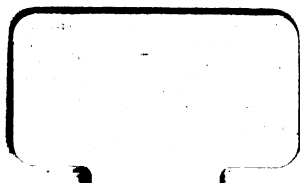




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